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Transitioning from Teammate to Coach: Effects on the Coach-Athlete Relationship

Ashwin Patel
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Ashwin Patel entitled "Transitioning from Teammate to Coach: Effects on the Coach-Athlete Relationship." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Sport Studies.

Leslee A. Fisher, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Craig Wrisberg, Handel Wright

Accepted for the Council:
Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Vice Chancellor and
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(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

Transitioning From Teammate to Coach:

Effects on the Coach-Athlete Relationship

A Thesis

Presented for the

Masters of Science

Degree

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Ashwin J. Patel

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my mother whose inspiration even after her passing helped guide me through this process. You are forever in my thoughts. I love you.

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There are so many people who made this thesis a reality. First, and foremost, I would like to thank my committee members – Dr. Fisher, Dr. Wright, and Dr. Wrisberg - who went above and beyond the call of duty to make sure I was able to complete this paper. It was your patience, understanding, compassion, and knowledge that helped make this paper a reality. Without your unquestioned support and guidance I honestly do not know where I would be right now.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the experience of transitioning from a teammate to a coach affected the relationship between a coach and his players. A semi-structured qualitative interview guide was employed to ask participants broad open-ended questions to elicit responses regarding their various experiences in the coach-athlete relationship. This allowed me to probe the participant when needed (Kvale, 1996). Probing questions such as "What was that like for you?", "How does that make you feel?" and "Talk more about that" were included to help participants explore the dynamics involved in the coach-athlete relationship (Pollio, Henley & Thompson, 1997). Six athletes (1 coach and 5 players) were interviewed with the interviews lasting an average of 40 minutes. Each interview was subsequently transcribed and analyzed using an interpretive analysis. Three major areas of discussion emerged: 1) Renegotiating Personal Relationships, 2) Role Transition, and 3) Developing a Coaching Style. The major areas of discussion were discussed in terms of the coach-athlete relationship and transition in sport literature. Finally, implications for coaches, players, management, sport psychology consultants, and researchers were discussed.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

I first began working with the Knoxville Ice Bears twenty eight games into their sixty game season in January, 2003. At that time, the Ice Bears were in fourth place in the now defunct Atlantic Coast Hockey League (ACHL). This league included five other teams: the Jacksonville Barracudas, Orlando Seals, Macon Trax, Winston-Salem Parrots and Cape Fear Fire Ants. The ACHL was created in 2002 with the intention of establishing a niche in the geographical areas not dominated by the East Coast Hockey League (ECHL), the premier minor league organization in the eastern United States. The league would differ from other minor league organizations in that teams would play sixty games, starting in October and ending in late March, which amounted to twenty games less than the other leagues played. The majority of the players in the ACHL were former collegiate, ECHL, Central Hockey League (CHL), United Hockey League (UHL), American Hockey League (AHL) and National Hockey League (NHL) athletes. Most of the players had played college hockey or the equivalent of Double A (East Coast Hockey League, Central Hockey League or United Hockey League) or Triple A (American Hockey League) hockey prior to coming to the ACHL.

At season's end, the Knoxville Ice Bears had rallied to take second place but eventually lost in the President's Cup final to the Orlando Seals. While most of the players were content with how the season had ended, several voiced their concerns about returning to a team with the same coach. Many felt the coach was overly negative and distant from the players, both on and off the ice. In addition, they expressed frustration over the fact that their input was often ignored or minimized by the coach. Within a

couple of months, the organization had grown tired of the infighting between the coach and general manager and decided to make some changes. The owners hired the former assistant coach to be the general manager and hired a newly retired player from the team to become the head coach. During the course of the summer, the new coach signed several of his former teammates to the team. By the beginning of training camp, six of his teammates from the previous year were in camp. Each one made the team and played a significant role in the team's success throughout the following year. The fact that these players played for a coach that had been their teammate the season before presented a unique challenge to their relationship with him and to his with them. The purpose of this study was to examine that relationship in more depth.

In the remainder of this chapter, a brief literature review concerning the coach-athlete relationship is presented. Specifically, three types of theories that address the coach-athlete relationship are reviewed in addition to a relatively new shift in the literature focusing on the athlete's role in developing and maintaining the coach-athlete relationship. Finally, a statement of the problem and the purpose of the research are given along with assumptions made, limitations, delimitations and definitions used in this study.

Why Look At Coach-Athlete Relationships in Hockey?

The present study focused on the bi-directionality of the coach-athlete relationship. Jowett and Meek (2000) suggest that "…[t]he extent to which the coach and athlete influence each other and consequently performance and participation in general are fundamental issues to the coaching process" (p.157). Taking it a step further, Carron and Bennett (1997) claim:

> Inherent in any conclusion about coach-athlete compatibility based on the coach's personality traits, attitudes, and/or values is one major shortcoming - the athlete is treated as a virtual nonparticipant in the relationship; the factor of interaction is ignored. An accurate assessment of the factors contributing to or detracting from coach-athlete compatibility must take into account the needs, involvement, and contributions of both (Carron & Bennett, 1977, p. 672).

Carron and Bennett (1977) were among the first researchers to consider the importance of compatibility in the coach-athlete relationship. They highlighted the importance of interpersonal relationships between the coach and athlete and urged researchers to explore the dynamics involved in this interaction. In the twenty-seven years since that initial study there has been considerable research examining the coach-athlete relationship, most that has emphasized athletes' perception of and satisfaction with coaches' behaviors and leadership abilities (Chelladurai, 1978; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978, 1980; Horne & Carron, 1985). However, there are still some aspects of this relationship that have not been covered such as the relationship between players when one becomes coach of a team.

In the early 1970s, researchers were interested in the specific traits of the coach (Hendry, 1972, 1974; Wylleman, 2000). In these studies, attempts were made to identify traits that mediate coach-athlete interactions. For example, Hendry (1972; 1974) found coaches to be generally controlling, emotionally distant or inflexible. These characteristics were consistent with the traditional stereotype of the male coach/physical educator: Authoritative and impersonal (e.g., Bear Bryant, Woody Hayes and Adolph Rupp). Interestingly, Hendry (1972) also found that successful athletes demonstrated similar traits as those of coaches.

In the next phase of research, the focus shifted from individual traits of the coach to the methods and philosophies coaches use (Wylleman, 2000). Two prominent models emerged from this research. The first one, the Mediational Model of Leadership (Smoll, Smith, Curtis, & Hunt, 1978) represented a social reinforcement and modeling approach to the coach-athlete relationship (Wylleman, 2000). Around the same time, Smith, Smoll, and Hunt (1977) created the Coaching Behavior Assessment System (CBAS) that allowed researchers to observe the coach's behavior toward athletes, including "…reactive (elicited) behavior, … responses to athlete behavior, and spontaneous (emitted) behavior, … responses initiated by the coach" (Wylleman, 2000, p. 556). Since that time a number of researchers have used the CBAS to show that the manner in which a coach behaves is directly related to athletes' interest and enjoyment in the sport (Smoll, Smith, Barnett, & Everett, 1993; Smoll & Smith, 1989; Solomon, Dimarco, Ohlson, & Reece, 1998).

Around the same time, Chelladurai (1978) began to examine the notion of leadership and the role it plays in the coach-athlete relationship. Regarding his Multidimensional Model of Leadership, Chelladurai (1993) stressed that:

> "…group performance and member satisfaction are considered to be a function of the congruence among three states of leader behavior - required, preferred, and actual. The antecedents of these three states of leader behavior are the characteristics of the situation, the leader, and the members" (p. 647).

This model suggests that leaders act in certain ways and that their behavior is partially determined by the parameters of the situation (Chelladurai, 1993). In addition, athletes are assumed to differ in how they like to be treated (which is also somewhat influenced by the situation). Thus, it is predicted that the actual performance and

satisfaction level of athletes will be a function of the congruence between athletes' needs and the leader's personality, ability and situational factors (Chelladurai, 1993).

In an effort to test this model, the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) was developed (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; 1980). The LSS is composed of 40 items that characterize five dimensions of leadership behavior in sports (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; 1980). This scale helps researchers understand athletes' perceptions of their coaches with respect to the manner in which coaches: (a) teach and coach players (training and instruction); (b) include players when making decisions (democratic or autocratic behavior); and (c) motivate players (social support and positive feedback) (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978; 1980).

That the coach-athlete relationship is extremely important to the performance and overall well-being of the athlete is well known (see Smith & Smoll, 1996; Vealey, Armstrong, Comar, & Greenleaf, 1998 for discussions). Unfortunately, the majority of studies on the coach-athlete relationship have focused primarily on the coaches' behaviors and leadership capabilities (Gould, Greenleaf, Guinan, & Chung, 2002; Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977). While these studies have produced some important information for the field of sport psychology (i.e., the characteristics of successful leaders and the traits athletes desire in a coach), most have not taken into account the perspectives of the other party involved in the coach-athlete relationship, namely, the athlete. As Wylleman (2000) suggests, this primary focus on the coach has implicitly reinforced the notion that the relationship between coaches and athletes is uni-directional rather than bi-directional. As such, the athlete's contribution to the coach-athlete dyad is often minimized or ignored. Although current researchers have begun to focus more on the athletes'

perspectives (Greenleaf, Gould, & Dieffenbach, 2001; Jowett & Meek, 2000; Riemer & Chelladurai, 1995; Vernacchia, McGuire, Reardon, & Templin, 2000), there remains a need for more systematic investigation of both the coach's and athlete's perspective of the coach-athlete relationship.

Statement of the Problem

In summary, coach-athlete relationships have been widely studied within sport psychology (Chelladurai, 1978; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978, 1980; Greenleaf, Gould, & Dieffenbach, 2001; Jowett & Meek, 2000; Molnar, 2002; Riemer & Chelladurai, 1995; Smith, Smoll, & Hunt, 1977; Vernacchia, McGuire, Reardon, & Templin, 2000). However, most research has emphasized the traits and behaviors of the coach. Clearly, more information regarding the athlete's view of the coach-athlete dyad is needed. Of relevance to the present study is recent research examining the dynamics of this dyad during a coaching transition (Molnar, 2002).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to explore the perspectives of both coach and athlete on a coach-athlete relationship that emerged as a result of a particular type of coaching transition; specifically one in which a former teammate becomes the coach. In this study, I interviewed a hockey coach and five of his former teammates (and present players) to determine how this transition from teammate to coach influenced the coach-athlete relationship. More specifically, I sought to explore the views of both the coach and the players concerning this unusual transition and the resulting circumstances. Guiding questions I used to achieve this goal included: What were the participants' respective reactions to a player-to-coach transition? What were the participants'

respective experiences? What were the similarities and differences in participants' experiences of the transition? How did the participants' reactions influence the coach-athlete relationship?

Significance of the Study

Those who stand to benefit most from the results of the present study are coaches and players who might be involved in a similar scenario, as well as consultants who provide services to athletes and coaches. A better understanding of this unique coach-athlete relationship should help consultants deal with the dynamic relationship between coaches and players during a coaching transition.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were relevant to this study:

1. An interview study based on a semi-structured interview guide is a valid methodology for obtaining qualitative data and for accurately describing both the coach's and athlete's experience of the unique transition that occurs when a former teammate becomes the coach and the resulting effects of this transition on the coach-athlete relationship.
2. The various experiences of athletes who have had a former teammate become their coach are important to the understanding of the resulting coach-athlete relationship.
3. The participants in the study are prepared to express themselves in a clear and coherent manner, to express feelings they experienced without hesitation or apprehension.

4. The participants in the study could truthfully describe their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs based on the experience of having a former teammate become their coach.

Limitations of the Study

As with most studies, there were various limitations in the present study. First, there was the potential for some of the athletes (both coach and players) to have difficulty recalling some of the thoughts and feelings they had surrounding the transition experience. This may be due to the fact that a year had passed since the transition had occurred. Second, the number of participants interviewed for this study was small. A number this small (six) would be problematic for quantitative studies that require larger numbers to generalize results to the population of interest; however, in this study a qualitative methodology involving a semi-structured interview format was used and no attempt was made to generalize the findings to other athletes and coaches.

Delimitations of the Study

For the purpose of this study, two delimitations were imposed:

1) Players included in this study had to be teammates of the coach during the previous year (2002-2003).
2) Players had to be members of the 2003-2004 Knoxville Ice Bears team, playing under the coach who was their former teammate.

Definition of Terms

Constructivist Paradigm – "Constructivists assume a world in which universal, absolute realities are unknowable, and the objects of inquiry are individual perspectives or constructions of reality. While acknowledging that elements are often shared across social groups, constructivist science argues that multiple realities exist that are inherently

unique because they are constructed by individuals who experience the world from their own vantage points" (Hatch, 2002, p. 15).

Interpretive Analysis – Interpretation involves "giving meaning to data. It's about making sense of social situations by generating explanations for what's going on within them. It's about making inferences, developing insights, attaching significance, refining understandings, drawing conclusions, and extrapolating lessons" (Hatch, 2002, p. 180).

Qualitative Research – "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.3).

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

> "Everyone reaches points in life when major changes occur. These points are called transitions" (Petitpas, Champagne, Chartland, Danish, & Murphy, 1997, p.3).

According to Petitpas et al. (1997), an athlete goes through several transitions during his/her sporting career. These transitions may be from junior high to high school, from high school to college, from college to the professional ranks, or from the professional ranks to retirement. In all these instances the athlete is required to adjust to the challenges at the next level, whether they are physical (i.e., lifting weights to gain muscle or changing eating habits to reach a desired weight) or psychological (i.e., receiving less playing time or positive reinforcement from one's coach or dealing with self-identity issues) (Petitpas et al., 1997).

In this chapter, I examine some of the research related to transitions in sport. Specifically, I address: (a) the historical approaches that have addressed career transitions in sport, (b) the theoretical perspectives on career transitions, (c) Taylor and Ogilvie's (1994) five-stage conceptual model of retirement from sport, and (d) the relationship between coach-athlete and transitions in sport.

Historical Approach to Career Transitions in Sport

It has only been over the last 25 years that career termination in sport has been studied by sport psychology consultants (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1998; 2001). Prior to that, athletes were considered to be relatively similar to those in the general population in both status and social class thus making their transitions out of sport relatively benign (McPherson, 1980). ESPN and other 24-hour sport channels had not yet become a

mainstay in North American society and the internet and other technological advances had not yet reached a point where an athlete's every move, both on and off the playing field, was scrutinized. In addition, the salaries of the players were not significantly greater than those of the general population (Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). Thus, the transition process from being an athlete to becoming an "average" citizen, according to Chartland and Lent (1987), was not as momentous as it may be today.

Taylor and Ogilvie (2001) suggest that the North American "laissez-faire" attitude of athlete development placed the onus of such development, including career departure, on the shoulder of athletes. Due to the constant influx of talent that replaced outgoing athletes the need to consider the challenges facing retiring athletes remained unexplored by sporting organizations. Sport psychology consultants who worked with athletes in such environments were not afforded the time to develop deeper relationships. Rather, they were brought in for limited periods of time and encouraged to focus their sessions on performance enhancement issues. Coaches and teams who did not want anything (such as transition or injury concerns) distracting athletes' focus on preparation for competition reinforced this emphasis on performance enhancement (Taylor, Ogilvie, Gould & Gardner, 1990). Thus, in their work with athletes and teams, sport psychology consultants rarely discussed issues related to sport transitions (Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001).

Beginning in the 1980s sport organizations became more aware of the importance of preparing athletes for career transitions (Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). For instance, in 1988, the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) prepared a manual outlining important issues concerning career termination and providing suggestions that might allow for a successful transition out of sport (USOC, 1988). Sport psychology consultants

working with United States Olympic teams also began to incorporate career termination planning into their sessions (Gould, Tammen, Murphy, & May, 1989; May & Brown, 1989). Professional sporting organizations such as the National Football League (NFL), the National Hockey League (NHL) and the National Basketball Association (NBA) also developed similar protocols for athletes facing transitions out of their respective sports (Ogilvie & Howe, 1982). One additional method developed to ease the trauma of career transitions is educational and occupational training (Chartland & Lent, 1987). Pawlak (1984) has suggested that athletes who are schooled in areas that are related to their sporting career – motor learning, coaching, and physical therapy – might remain tied to their sport after retirement, therefore easing the transition process. Sinclair and Orlick (1993) further suggested that staying involved in their sport after their playing days were over was another way athletes might ease their eventual transition out of sport.

Theoretical Perspectives on Career Transitions in Sport

According to Lavallee (2000), sport psychology researchers have attempted to "…conceptualize the career transition process ever since a debate emerged regarding the incidence of distress experienced by retiring athletes" (p. 1). Various explanations have been put forth regarding the difficulty of the transition process. The thanatology model proposed by Rosenberg (1982) suggests that when an athlete retires, s/he is socially isolated and rejected by former teammates. Leaving one's sport is likened to social death. These feelings of isolation may be avoided when athletes are able to stay connected to their sport (Sinclair & Orlick, 1993).

Another transition model proposed in the early 1980s conceptualized career termination as a gradual process rather than an abrupt event. Schlossberg (1981) defines

a transition as "…an event or non-event which results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one's behavior and relationships" (p.5). Several other transition frameworks focus on the interaction between the retirement of an athlete and the environment (Schlossberg, 1981; Sussman, 1971). However, the most accepted transition theory in the sport literature is Schlossberg's (1981) model of human adaptation. In Schlossberg's (1981) model, three major factors are presumed to interact during a transition: (a) the characteristics of the athlete going through the transition, (b) the perception the athlete has of the current transition, and (c) the characteristics of the pre- and post-transition environment (as cited in Lavallee, 2000).

Characteristics of the athlete that might influence the athlete's experience of transition include age, gender, socioeconomic status, health, race, ethnicity, and his/her prior experience with a similar transition (Schlossberg, 1981). Coakley (1983) contends that in order to better understand the adjustment process of the athlete, one must understand that each athlete will react differently based on his or her individual characteristics. The perception the athlete of the current transition suggests that how the athlete views the transition is of utmost importance to an understanding of the transition process. Charner and Schlossberg (1986) suggest that the source, duration, onset and role of change are all vital aspects of athletes' perceptions. According to Sinclair and Orlick (1993), athletes may perceive the transition process as a relief, as stressful, or as some combination of the two. Athletes' perceptions are also influenced by the relative effectiveness of their support systems (i.e., family, friends, coach, teammates, management, etc.) in preparing athletes for post-competition life (Schlossberg, 1981).

With respect to the support of coaches and teammates it might be argued that remaining closely tied to the sport as a coach following the completion of a playing career might ease an athlete's eventual separation from sport (Pawlak, 1984; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993).

Taylor and Ogilvie's (1994) Five-Stage Transition Model

More recently, Taylor and Ogilvie (1994) proposed a comprehensive model of career transition in sport. They posit five stages that include: (a) the causes of career termination; (b) the factors that influence athlete's adaptations to career transition; (c) the resources available that can aid the athlete's adaptation to career transition; (d) the quality of the career transition; and (e) the distress the athlete experiences during career transitions and the interventions that might help ease distress.

The causes of career termination. While there are various reasons why athletes no longer continue in their sport, the main reasons fall into one of two categories: involuntary (e.g., injury, deselection, and/or age) and voluntary (e.g., personal choice) (Lavallee & Wylleman, 2000; Murphy, 1995; Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Age has always been a primary cause of retirement in sport. In a study on Yugoslavian professional soccer players, Mihovilovic (1968) found that 27% of the players were forced into retirement due to their age. Svoboda and Vanek (1982) reported similar findings in their work with Czechoslovakian national team athletes as did Allison and Meyer (1988) in their study of professional female tennis players. One of the reasons older athletes are often forced into retirement is a loss of muscle mass or flexibility (Fisher & Conlee, 1979). Often, these athletes are dissatisfied with the thought of retirement and long to stay connected to their sport. Such uneasy feelings may be alleviated by continued involvement in the sport, albeit in a different role.

Deselection. One of the most traumatic avenues of career termination is being dismissed from a team (Svoboda & Vanek, 1982). Sports tend to follow the Darwinian "survival of the fittest" philosophy that focuses only on those athletes who are able to contribute significantly to a team (Ogilvie & Howe, 1982). In some cases, however, older, higher paid athletes are replaced by younger, lower paid ones with little regard for the older athletes' well-being. These veteran athletes are often left with few options to continue their athletic career. However, for some the opportunity to remain involved in their sport through coaching is a viable option.

Injury. Another important cause of career termination in sport is injury. Several researchers have found that when an athlete becomes injured, s/he can experience high levels of stress, which may be manifested in depression, substance abuse, fear and anxiety about her/his athletic future, and the loss of identity (Ogilvie & Howe, 1982; Weinberg & Gould, 2003; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). It appears that athletes whose playing career ends due to injury have a harder time adjusting to retirement compared to athletes who have greater control over the reasons for their retirement (Webb, Nasco, Riley, & Headrick, 1998). Even more frightening for some athletes is the possibility that a slight injury can disrupt their level of performance and put them on a faster track to career termination (Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). Therefore, an injury does not have to be serious to dramatically affect an athlete. However, when a serious injury does occur, it forces the athlete to devote much time and energy to the rehabilitation process instead of to improvement on the athletic field. This type of injury can further increase the likelihood that the athlete may no longer be able to continue in his/her sport. However, one way athletes can maximize the time off due to injury is to spend that time improving

the tactical understanding of their sport (Clayton, 1993; Smith, Scott, & Wiese, 1990; Udry, Gould, Bridges & Beck, 1997). Such knowledge might aid athletes when they return to participation from their injury or in future non-playing endeavors in their sport (e.g., as coaches).

Choosing to leave. Often neglected in the career termination literature is the decision by the athlete to leave sport on his/her own terms (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985). The decision by an athlete to retire is the least traumatic form of career termination (Taylor & Oglivie, 2001). Reasons why athletes choose to retire vary from having achieved their personal and professional goals, wanting to take a new direction in life, changes in their personal values, or wanting to spend more time with significant others (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; Lavallee, Grove, & Gordon, 1997; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982; Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001; Werthner & Orlick, 1986). Often those athletes who are ready for a new direction in their lives look to coaching as a way to move forward while still remaining connected to their sport (Robertson, 2003).

Factors contributing to athletes' adaptation to career transition. The ability of an athlete to adjust to life after sport is often influenced by psychological and social factors that have become an important part of the athlete's experience throughout her/his sport career (McPherson, 1980; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). One of the most fundamental psychological factors influencing the transition process involves the extent to which athletes define their identity in terms of their participation (and success) in sport (Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Ogilvie & Howe, 1982). For elite athletes, the amount of time spent in their sport often prevents them from pursuing outside interests and, thus, fosters an identity based primarily on their sport involvement (McPherson, 1980). As a

result, these athletes have limited outlets for deriving similar feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment that their sport provides (McPherson, 1980). Therefore, athletes whose identity is strongly tied to their sport have increased difficulty adjusting to the transition process and often experience feelings of distress when their career comes to an end (Grove, Lavallee, & Gordon, 1997). Thus, it is not uncommon for such athletes to want to remain connected to their sport in some way (Pawlak, 1984; Robertson, 2003; Sinclair & Ogilvie, 1993). Some of the options available to these athletes might include jobs as a coach, scout, or trainer within their sport.

Resources to help athletes adapt during career transitions. In order for athletes to adapt positively to the challenges experienced during a career transition they need to be provided with the necessary resources to help facilitate the transition. Research has found that those athletes who have developed effective coping skills, such as cognitive restructuring, imagery, and goal setting, are less likely to experience stress and better equipped to handle career transitions than athletes who haven't developed such skills (Bruning & Frew, 1987; Lazarus, 1972; Murphy, 1995; Smith, 1980; Taylor & Ogilvie; 1994; Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). In a study by Sinclair and Orlick (1993), world-class athletes reported refocusing their energies on new tasks, maintaining a consistent physical workout and staying in contact with their old sport as effective coping strategies for dealing with the transition process. More recently, Robertson (2003) interviewed three former elite level female Canadian athletes who said that they were able to cope with the termination of their playing careers by continuing in their sport as coaches. This suggests that remaining involved in one's sport as a coach might be an effective strategy for an athlete dealing with a career transition.

Sinclair and Orlick (1993) also mention the important role of social support in helping athletes deal with the transition process. For many elite level athletes the majority of their social support comes from their sporting environment (Botterill, 1990; Coakley, 1983). However, when the athlete's playing career ends, s/he might not receive the same level of support from that environment that s/he once did. This loss of social support might be avoided if the athlete is able to stay connected to the people who provided support for him/her during his/her playing career.

Despite the research suggesting that individuals who plan for alternatives after their playing careers have ended experience a positive career transition (Haerle, 1975; Svoboda & Vanek, 1982), most athletes don't do this and thus are often ill-prepared for life after sport (Chartland & Lent, 1987; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993). Blann and Zaichkowsky (1989) reported that only 37% of professional hockey players and 25% of professional baseball players had a post-career plan in place prior to retirement. Some athletes may not plan for retirement because they are totally focused on their sport (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985) while others may resist preparing for life after sport because their identity is strongly tied to their role as an athlete (Grove, Lavallee, & Gordon, 1997). For the latter, finding a career within their sport after they complete their playing careers may be beneficial to the transition process.

Coach-Athlete Relationships and Transitions

The coach-athlete relationship is very influential in determining the athlete's level of satisfaction with his or her sport (Butler, 1997; Horne & Carron, 1985; Salminen & Liukkonen, 1996). How the coach instructs, communicates with, and provides feedback to his/her players has a profound affect on how the athlete views his/her sport experience.

Despite the abundance of literature on the coach-athlete relationship and its affects on performance and satisfaction (see Gould, Greenleaf, Guinan, & Chung, 2002; Gould, Guinan, Greenleaf, Medbery, & Peterson, 1999; Horne & Carron, 1985), there is a dearth of research that looks at coaching transitions in sport and the effects these transitions have on the athlete and the coach-athlete relationship. This may seem somewhat surprising based on the high incidence of coaching turnover that occurs each year in both the collegiate and professional ranks. Presently, there are no statistics on the number of NCAA or professional coaches who quit, retire, move to another program, or are fired on an annual basis. To date, only one study has attempted to gain a better understanding of athletes' experiences with a coaching transition (Molnar, 2002).

Using a qualitative phenomenological methodology, Molnar (2002) asked 8 Division I athletes to discuss their experience of a coaching transition. Analysis of the results (see Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997, for further readings on phenomenological procedures) revealed that the themes characterizing these athletes' experience were contextualized within a ground of performance and centered on the relationship they had with their coach. These themes and their related sub-themes included: 1) Change (Shock or No Surprise, Relief and Sadness, and Frustration of the Unknown), 2) Bonding (Transfer Talk, Us versus Them, and Team Unity and Friendship), 3) Expectations (Winning, Increased Playing Time, and Starting), 4) Acclimation (Team Rules, and Individual Roles) or Alienation (Transferring, Quitting, and Resignation), and 5) Growth (Personal, Athletic, or Spiritual).

The first major theme (Change) referred to the participants' experiences with the coaching transition. While the specific experience was not the same for all athletes, the

change induced one or more of the following feelings in all participants: shock, surprise, frustration, sadness and relief. The next theme (Bonding) was related to the participants attempt to make sense of the coaching transition in an attempt to protect themselves from the change. In most cases this involved forming new relationships or repairing/strengthening relationships with teammates in order to make up for the loss of the previous coach.

The next theme (Expectations) centered on athletes' feelings that they needed to perform well for the new coach. Some also felt that the new coach might be able to help them perform at a higher level while others expected their playing time to increase due to the coaching transition. With a new coach, some of the participants felt that they would be able to start fresh and not be handicapped by the prejudices of the previous coach regarding them or their ability. This perception is consistent with Coakley's (1998) claim that athlete's status on teams is chiefly based on the coaches' assessment of their physical ability and perceived value to the team.

The fourth theme (Acclimation or Alienation) dealt with athletes' willingness to accept or oppose the rules and roles stipulated by the new coach. For most this meant accepting new roles on the team because of the potential benefits of doing so (i.e., becoming more vocal leader among teammates, switching positions, and/or learning a new event). The participants also noticed that coaches who remained on staff when the new coach arrived also had to acclimate to new roles. This was particularly pertinent for coaches who were elevated from assistant coach to head coach. No longer were the participant's able to fraternize with the coach the way they had done prior to the coach's promotion. The coach was now viewed as having new responsibilities as a head coach

and could no longer be seen as a "friend," which was sometimes the case when the coach served as an assistant. For those that were unwilling to adhere to the coaching transition and the resulting changes in the athlete-coach relationship, transferring to another school and quitting the team were seen as the primary options.

The fifth and final theme (Growth) dealt with the positive outcomes the athletes felt they derived from the coaching transition. For the most part, these growth outcomes represented three areas of athletes' lives: personal, athletic, and spiritual. Molnar (2002) found coaching transitions to be a very personal, emotional and sometimes traumatic event that affected athletes' performance as well as their relationships with teammates and the new coach. In that regard, the athletes experienced a variety of emotions, particularly fear, relief, anger, frustration, and confusion.

Molnar (2002) contends that the results of his study challenge the uni-directional notion of the coach-athlete relationship because they show that athletes influence and act upon the coach as well as vice versa. He also suggests that to gain a more encompassing viewpoint of a coaching transition it is important for future researchers to describe the transition experience from both the athletes' and the coach's perspective. To this end, the current study represents an initial attempt to examine both perspectives in a situation involving a former player's promotion to the position of head coach.

Summary

The available research shows that transitional experiences are multidimensional and can be quite traumatic for competitive athletes (Blinde & Greendorfer, 1985; Chartland & Lent, 1987; Grove, Lavallee, & Gordon, 1997; Murphy, 1995; Ogilvie & Howe, 1982; Sinclair & Orlick, 1993; Smith, 1980; Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994; Taylor &

Ogilvie, 2001). In addition, the existing research clearly demonstrates that athletes' performance and satisfaction with their sport is affected by the nature of the coach-athlete relationship (Butler, 1997; Jowett & Meek, 2000; Molnar, 2002; Riemer & Chelladurai, 1995; Salminen & Liukonnen, 1996; Smith & Smoll, 1996; Vealey, Armstrong, Comar, & Greenleaf, 1998). However, the majority of studies have focused on the traits and behaviors of the coach rather than on the athlete's contribution to the relationship. Therefore, more research is needed to more clearly understand the athlete's role in the coach-athlete dyad. The results of Molnar's (2002) study suggest that it is important to consider both the athlete and the incoming coach when examining a coaching transition and the resulting effects it has on the coach-athlete relationship. The present study represented an attempt to explore the coach-athlete relationship that exists when a former teammate becomes the head coach. To accomplish this purpose, interviews were conducted with both the players and the coach in order to determine how the players viewed and interacted with their former teammate and how the coach viewed the changed relationship he had with them as a result of his transition from the role of player and teammate to that of coach.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Without question, the majority of sport psychology research has been based upon a positivist perspective. As suggested by Greenwood and Levin (2000), this perspective assumes that only through rigorous quantitative science can practitioners learn about reality. Recently, several researchers have embraced a post-positivistic position that proposes that when research deals with people, traditional science does not provide all the answers (Cook & Campbell, 1979; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Thus, some researchers have moved away from the positivist paradigm towards a more constructivist perspective.

As Hatch (2002) states, constructivists believe the world is made up of unique multiple realities that are "…constructed by individuals who experience the world from their own vantage points" (p. 15). Within sport psychology, a constructivist view would hold that each individual is affected by different situations or interventions and each athlete constructs his or her own reality regarding the sport experience. In order to understand athletes' experience a qualitative research approach is necessary.

Qualitative researchers incorporate unique interviewing procedures that differ from those incorporated in quantitative studies. The majority of questions in quantitative studies and restrictive interview guides are closed-ended, contain yes/no items, and do not allow for any type of clarification or elaboration (Dale, 1996). The information gathered is then analyzed using some form of statistical analysis in an attempt to validate the findings. Qualitative interviews, as posited by Hatch (2002), involve a more

> …special kind of speech event during which [researchers] ask open-ended questions, encourage informants to explain their unique perspectives on the issues

> at hand, and listen intently for special language and other clues that reveal meaning structures informants use to understand their worlds (p. 23).

These meaning structures are often hidden during the observation process and minimized or taken for granted by the participant (Hatch, 2002). Through the use of qualitative methods, these meanings are more readily brought to the forefront. As stated by Patton (1990), it is very difficult to find out "…what is in and on someone else's mind" (p. 278) without the use of qualitative interviewing procedures.

Using the constructivist approach, I incorporated a naturalistic qualitative research methodology to guide the collection and analysis of the data in this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This approach afforded me the opportunity to spend a great deal of time interviewing the participants and observing them in their natural hockey settings (Strean, 1998). It prepared me to more effectively interpret and reconstruct the manner in which participants used constructions to shape their understandings of their environment, their experiences, and their personal relationships (Heyink & Tymstra, 1993).

Bracketing Interview

Before interviewing any of the participants, I participated in a bracketing interview (see Appendix B). A sport psychology professor who had previous experience with semi-structured interviews conducted this interview. The bracketing interview included the same interview guide used later with the participants with a few exceptions. Since I have not played professional hockey or gone through a coaching change like the one undergone by the players who were participants in this study, my bracketing interview focused on the impressions I had of coaches and what I thought it might be like to be on a team where a former teammate was one's coach (see Appendix B). While it

was essential to build a level of rapport with the participants prior to conducting interviews, it was equally important to address certain assumptions I had regarding the topic prior to conducting the interviews. That way I would be aware of any preconceived notions I might have that could lead to biased or leading questions. Therefore, although I decided to use a semi-structured interview guide for the basis of the study, I also decided that I would incorporate some of the techniques of the phenomenological tradition of research in terms of a bracketing interview. This bracketing interview helped me to gain a perspective of how I felt the transition from teammate to coach might impact the coach-athlete relationship which, in turn, minimized my potential for bias during the interpretive analysis (Dale, 1996, 2000; Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997;Valle, King, & Halling, 1989).

Regarding the transition from teammate to coach, I had expected each participant to discuss loss of identity, fear, increase in time demands, and the recruitment process. I also felt that the coach would experience great difficulties having to change the relationships he had with his former teammates as he assumed a new role on the team. I also thought that the players would view the transition as positive, due to the relationship they had with the coach as a former teammate. I also expected the players to discuss the increased responsibilities they were given once their former teammate and friend took over. I thought that players might express relief regarding their playing time and status on the team and also a feeling of certainty.

The bracketing interview also included my perceptions of the participants in this study. The following portraits of the participants represent my impressions based on

interactions I had with and observations I made of the individuals during the last two years while serving as the team's sport psychology consultant:

Henry[1] *(the current coach and former player).* Henry was drafted by a National Hockey League (NHL) franchise in the early 1990s. He performed well as a forward during their training camps but was sent down to their American Hockey League (AHL) affiliate for further experience once the season began. After bouncing up and down in the AHL he was finally granted his release, which came as a relief to him. He was tired of the lack of continuity that came from being called up and then sent back down throughout his stay in the minor leagues. He joined a team in the East Coast Hockey League (ECHL) where he excelled becoming a league all-star. For the next several years he was one of the top players in that league. He received some strong tutelage from his coaches who taught him discipline and responsibility, two things that he admitted he was lacking earlier in his career. Henry was promoted to player-assistant coach during his last four years playing professional hockey and realized that a coaching career was something he wanted to pursue. He seemed to be a natural leader among his teammates, both on and off the ice. However, I noticed that he often seemed distant and cold to some of the younger players on the team. His stronger relationships seemed to primarily be with the veteran players and he did not seem to take an active role assisting in the development of the rookies.

Steve. Steve was the most cerebral player on the team. He was able to put the team's performances in perspective and often provided insight for both the previous

[1] Names of participants are pseudonyms chosen by the players during their interviews. This is explained in more detail later on in this chapter.

coach (e.g., in terms of strategy) and his teammates (e.g., skill acquisition and positioning on the ice) regarding various facets of the game. He played college hockey as a forward, was drafted, and, after a successful NHL training camp, gained confidence that he could play at a high level in hockey. He took what he learned from his experience at the NHL camp and incorporated it into his daily routines for the remainder of his playing career. He was often seen after practices talking to several of the younger players who seemed to appreciate the need some encouragement or extra instruction. A lot of players on the team seemed to appreciate the intangible leadership qualities that Steve brought to the locker room as well as to the ice. He was the leading scorer for the team during the playoffs and was constantly looking for ways to motivate and improve team members during the season. I felt Steve was someone that could help Henry by returning and playing for him the following year. Steve had a solid relationship with Henry as a teammate and often conversed with him on topics both related and unrelated to hockey.

Mark. Mark was the consummate professional. The heart and soul of the team. He was a forward and the oldest member of the team who played each shift as if it were his last. Mark was the epitome of a team player. In my opinion he was the most determined and gritty player on the team, often relying on his guile and intelligence to win battles for the puck. His teammates likened Mark to Steve Yzerman (captain of the NHL's Detroit Red Wings), one of the most respected leaders/players in the NHL. Like Yzerman, Mark was not the most vocal member of the team but when he spoke the entire team listened. Mark willed his teammates to perform better through his actions and behavior both on and off the ice. As captain of the team, he only asked the players to perform to the best of their ability and to never take shifts off, something that he never did. Mark was nearing

the end of his career and told me that he was considering a career in coaching when he retired. I believe Mark would excel at this role if he so desired to pursue a coaching career.

Felix. Felix is the sniper; the goal scoring forward who never saw a shot he did not like. He developed rather late as a player and never really considered playing hockey as a profession until after his last year in college. After a successful year playing overseas, Felix returned to the United States with a wife and child to continue his career. He became one of the top scorers in the league but was often derided about his lack of two-way (defensive) prowess. While Mark understood the importance of working harder in the defensive zone, he admitted that he gets caught up cheating on defense, so he can break out on offense. When things were not going well for him offensively he would often become frustrated because he felt that offense was his primary role on the team. Felix was an acquaintance of Henry's as a teammate and looked forward to taking on a larger role on the team with Henry as the coach.

Terrier. Terrier seemed to me to constantly battle inner demons, which was manifested in a quick temper and occasional confrontations with coaches. By his own admission, he realized that he was sometimes too quick to point the blame at others when he was not performing at his best. Terrier was quick to become frustrated when he or the team were not performing up to his expectations. I think this may be due to the fact that Terrier still maintained the dream of making it to the NHL as a goalie and, therefore, needed his teammates/coaches to give the effort to help him reach the next level. When Terrier felt the effort level was not there he was not shy in expressing his feelings to the rest of the team. However, he was a passionate individual who often would stay after

practice to work on his skills or help other players in their shooting drills. Terrier was well liked by teammates, who enjoyed his determination and professionalism.

Ferris. Ferris was the all-star forward and crowd favorite who returned to the team midseason after playing most of the year in another league. He thoroughly enjoyed playing with Henry when they were linemates the previous year and looked forward to playing for Henry when he became the coach. Ferris was an extremely creative offensive player who often took the scoring burden off several of his teammates. Ferris was well liked by everyone on the team and often organized social functions for the entire team to attend.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of six Caucasian males from the 2002-2003 roster of one minor league professional hockey team (see Table 1). Five of the

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Table 1

Synopsis of Participants

Athlete *	**Position**	**Age**	**Years of Experience**
Steve	Forward	28	5
Mark	Forward	30	9
Ferris	Forward	27	4
Felix	Forward	27	4
Terrier	Goalie	26	2
Henry (Coach)	Forward	30	11

* = self selected pseudonym

participants were current players and the sixth participant was the current coach. Their ages ranged from 26 to 30 years (M = 28) and their total years of professional playing experience ranged from 3 to 11 (M = 5.83). Four of the participants (3 players and the coach) were from Canada, and two were from the United States. Two of the participants were married and one of the participants had a child.

Procedure

The participants were contacted by telephone or face-to-face to determine their desire to participate in the study. The participants then chose a time and location for the interview to occur. All six of the interviews were conducted face-to-face in the homes of the participants. The interviews varied in length from 25 to 60 minutes.

Before the interviews began, each participant was informed about the purpose of the study, that the interview was going to be audiotaped and that confidentiality would be maintained by removing any identifying names – individual schools or teams - from the transcript. All six participants agreed to participate in the study and signed a consent form (Appendix A) before the interviews were conducted.

Interview Protocol

A semi-structured interview was implemented in this study. The researcher's role in a semi-structured interview is to assist and guide rather than dictate precisely what will ensue during the session (Smith, 1995). A semi-structured qualitative interview guide (see Appendix B) was employed to address specific objectives while allowing participants some freedom in meeting them.

I began the interview by asking the participant to provide general demographic information. I then asked the participant to respond to a series of open-ended questions

designed to obtain insights into the participant's experience of transition of a former teammate becoming a coach and the resulting effect on the coach-athlete relationship (Appendix B). However, this guide was used primarily as a probing device. The participants were asked broad open-ended questions to elicit their responses about various aspects of the coach-athlete relationship. This allowed me to probe the participant when needed (Kvale, 1996). Probing questions such as "What was that like for you?", "How does that make you feel?" and "Talk more about that" were included to encourage a thicker and richer description of the coach-athlete relationship (Pollio, Henley & Thompson, 1997). All participants were asked the same questions in the same order except for a few minor changes to the interview guide (Appendix B) for the coach. For example, the question "What was it like to play for a former teammate?" was altered to "What was it like to coach some of your former teammates?"

The participants were interviewed at their home during a time that was convenient for them. For the most part, they were all willing open to discuss their experiences regarding the coach-athlete relationship. While this was more true for some of the veteran players on the team, each player responded with candor and elaborated when probed for further detail (see Appendix C for Steve's transcript to get a better sense of the experience).

Data Analysis

The premise behind qualitative data analysis according to Polkinghorne (1989) is to provide structure and clarity based on the raw data provided by the participants. Several researchers have provided comparable frameworks for analyzing and interpreting qualitative data (e.g., Cote, Salmela, Baria & Russell, 1993; Dale, 1996; Hatch, 2002;

Tesch, 1990). Using a hybrid of those approaches, I analyzed the data in this study in the following way. The first step in the process involved transcribing the interviews verbatim. I then read through the transcripts several times to become thoroughly familiar with the data as a whole (Dale, 1996). Next, I re-read the data and attempted to systematically create and record my impressions of what I believe occurred within the context of the data (Hatch, 2002). I wrote these interpretations down in memos on the margin of the transcripts and then attempted to search for patterns in the participants' experiences (see Appendix C for a sample).

This process of discovering meaningful units involved highlighting and color-coding each statement that represented a different topic or major area of discussion (Kvale, 1996). Following that, I re-read the data once more and began to code it in places where the "interpretations [were] supported or challenged" (Hatch, 2002, p. 181). This process created data that helped me decide whether my initial impressions were supported by the data. After identifying the major areas of discussion that emerged from the data for each individual, I compared and contrasted these areas of discussion with those that emerged from the rest of the participants' transcripts. This process allowed me to explore each similarity and difference of the participants' experiences until consensus regarding potential areas of discussion was reached.

The next step involved summarizing my interpretations of the memos by writing a draft summary for each transcript. This process forced me to put my interpretations of the data in a story form that others could understand (Hatch, 2002). Two other researchers familiar with qualitative data analysis also examined the transcripts independently to further strengthen the interpretation of the information (Patton, 2002). Each signed a

confidentiality agreement (see Appendix D). Prior to examining the transcripts I met with the researchers to compare results and discuss the development of major areas of discussion. Various major areas of discussion and sub areas of discussions were rearranged or removed entirely as a result of our meetings.

I then met with the participants and asked them to read the draft summary and their transcript in order to determine if what I had written accurately represented their feelings on the topic (Polkinghorne, 1989). The participants were given an opportunity to expand upon what was written, to convey ideas they might have previously left out regarding their experiences, and to respond to or amend any of my interpretations. The main rationale for this process was to assure that my interpretations were accurately encompassing the experiences of the participants (Polkinghorne, 1989). None of the participants made any changes or additions to their transcript.

In summary, a semi-structured interview was implemented in this study to gain a better understanding of participants' experiences of a unique transition - having a former teammate become a coach - and the affects of this transition on the new coach-athlete relationship. An interpretative analysis was utilized to analyze and provide meaning to the participants' responses by identifying relevant areas of discussion that emerged from the data.

Chapter IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the interpretive analysis of the coach's and players' responses are presented in this section. The results revealed 3 major areas of discussion: (a) renegotiating personal relationships, (b) role transition, and (c) developing a coaching style (See Tables 2 & 3). These areas of discussion are further divided into related sub areas of discussions. A discussion of all the major areas of discussion and related sub areas of discussions is presented, including rationale for each area of discussion, and quotes from the coach and athletes are offered to support the areas of discussion. The areas of discussion and related sub areas of discussion for the coach are discussed first followed by those for the players.

Renegotiating Personal Relationships (Coach)

In this study Henry was asked to describe the way in which his relationships with the other athletes changed as a result of his transition to head coach. The two sub areas of discussion that emerged from this main area of discussion of renegotiating personal relationships included: (a) redefining social relationships, and (b) communicating with players.

Redefining social relationships. The first sub areas of discussion, redefining social relationships, represented the way in which Henry's interactions with athletes on the team changed due to his transition from player to head coach. In addition, this sub area of discussion dealt with the ways in which that transition influenced the coach-athlete relationship. Henry had a relationship with several of the participants in this study on a social level outside of hockey. In certain instances, he considered some of his former

Table 2

Major Areas of Investigation and Sub Areas of Discussion (Coach)

Major Area of Investigation	Sub Areas of Discussion
Renegotiating Personal Relationships	Redefining social relationships Communicating with players
Role Transition	Issues of control Reinventing oneself
Developing Coaching Style	Approach to training camp Being honest Not overextending oneself Recruiting players you respect Former teammates as allies

Table 3

Major Areas of Investigation and Sub Areas of Discussion (Players)

Major Areas of Investigation	Sub Areas of Discussion
Renegotiating Personal Relationships	Proving oneself Sticking together Similar interests Redefining social relationships
Role Transition	Increased leadership role Increased autonomy Liaison between players and coach
Developing Coaching Style	Approach to training camp Coach as a player Interaction Style Difficulty controlling emotions

teammates close friends and found it difficult not to spend time with them outside of hockey like he once did as a player. Henry stated, "It's more like hanging out in locker rooms…couldn't do that anymore, before or after practice." Henry also indicated that the expectations placed on him as a head coach required him to renegotiate his relationships with former teammates outside of hockey. More specifically, he discussed being cognizant of the boundaries that he had to set regarding his relationship with the athletes, both on and off the ice:

> When we are at the rink, you know, 'I am your coach and your boss' and there is a line that won't be crossed. And when we are away from the rink, um, you know, we were friends before, we will be friends now. …Wouldn't hang out with them as much as I did when I was a player. But every once in awhile I would go and have a beer with them or whatever. It was just important to establish those personal boundaries now that I was the coach.

Henry seemed to understand that the manner in which he socialized with his former teammates needed to change in order for him to effectively establish proper coach-athlete boundaries. In their study of parent-coaches Wylleman and De Knop (1998) examined the interpersonal relationships of people who have several roles within a team. They found that athletes perceived positively individuals who were able to clearly delineate their roles as coach and parent and keep them separated. While Henry found it difficult to keep his dual roles separate, he realized that for him to be successful and maintain a level of professionalism, he had to clearly distinguish his roles as coach and friend. He was able to successfully learn how to navigate these changes in his

relationships through experiences he had as a player and by communicating with former players who became coaches.

Communicating with players. In addition to redefining his relationships with the athletes off the ice, Henry discussed the need to change the way he communicated with his former teammates as well as the new players on the ice. For instance, when dealing with his younger players, Henry felt it was especially important to provide instructional feedback. He stated,

> A lot of these [younger] players at this level haven't played at high levels of junior or at college. They played at lower levels and they need to receive more teaching. …Just little things here and there. A lot of little drills helping what their weaknesses were. And we had some guys with weaknesses (laughing).

As a player Henry had been able to motivate, lead by example and criticize teammates when called for. However, as a coach he felt he had to be more careful with both the tone and message he gave to his players. This recognition of how to behave seems to echo Chelladurai's (1993) findings that coaches should tailor their behaviors and communication styles to best fit the needs of their players. As well, Henry became more aware of how to differentiate his comments to younger players, whom he felt needed more instructional feedback, and older players, with whom he could draw on his own recent experiences as a player to help them through whatever rough spots they might be experiencing. He stated,

> With them (veteran players) maybe I would show it to them on film or I would just pull them in the office. 'Cause with guys like that, and I knew that from experience, you know when you are playing well and you know when you are not

> playing well. At the beginning of the season they were all struggling. And they knew that. I would call them into the office and tell them, 'you guys are struggling and I just need you guys to pick it up.' Eventually, it took a little while to get things going, but we sorted things out. …You just have to encourage them and keep them in the right frame of mind that you have done this in the past so you can do it now. That's what I tried to do with [names of four veteran players].

Sinclair & Orlick (1993) suggest that being able to relate to athletes in terms of technique, strategy and skill are invaluable forms of assistance that a coach like Henry can provide, which can, in turn, bring about improved relations between player and coach. Thus, it seems like relating personal playing experiences and understanding the manner in which one communicates with players is something Henry understood about the transition process of going from teammate to coach.

Role Transition

Throughout the interview, Henry described his transition from player to coach as very challenging. However, he felt that this transition made him focus less on his own wants and become more cognizant of his players' needs. Therefore, the second major area of discussion, role transition, included two sub areas of discussion: (a) issues of control and (b) reinventing self.

Issues of control. As a player, Henry was able to take control of various situations on the ice to dictate the outcome of the game. As a coach, however, he had little control over the outcome of the game. This sub area of discussion represented Henry's recognition of his new responsibilities as a coach and the importance of focusing on the

needs of his players rather than on the things he could not control. He discussed controllable factors in this way,

> …the hardest thing is when you are playing, when you are a player, you can have some sort of affect on the game. You can do something, especially as a player, you know, an offensive player like I was, I could contribute to the game, I could win a face off, I could score a goal, I could set a goal up. It was hard standing behind the bench, knowing that I could still be probably the best player on the ice and not be able to do anything about it. I could prepare the players mentally, and give them every system in the world, but the hardest thing was standing behind the bench, not being able to do anything. And it took me a while to just say 'your job is to prepare them mentally and prepare them system-wise and keep them off-beat.' That was my job.

This finding is consistent with other transition in sport literature which suggests that smooth transitions from sport could be facilitated by having former athletes coach and use their experience to help the organization (Mihovilovic, 1968). This sentiment was echoed by Sinclair and Orlick (1993) who found that elite athletes who find a new direction to focus their energy, in addition to staying involved in their sport, are eased in such a transition.

Reinventing oneself. The sub area of discussion "reinventing oneself" dealt with Henry's experience of shifting identities from player to coach and how this positively impacted the coach-athlete relationship. Specifically, Henry discussed developing a new identity as a coach that focused on the process of helping advance the careers of some of his athletes. He said:

> So getting those two guys to further their career and their dream to play at the highest level possible at the NHL. But even if they only end up playing in the AHL or the ECHL it is still a good feeling to know that you helped someone further their career and become a better hockey player.

Previous research has found that the ability for athletes to transition successfully out of sport is largely tied to how much they identify themselves according to their sport (Greendorfer & Blinde, 1985; Taylor & Ogilvie, 2001). In several cases athletes are so invested in their sport participation that they are considered one-dimensional and do not have other activities that they may derive enjoyment from (Ogilvie & Howe, 1982). However, in this case, Henry was able to stay connected to his sport and invest his interests in coaching in an attempt to bring similar satisfaction and gratification to others as he felt in his playing days. In fact, he was able to derive most of his happiness as a first year coach helping develop players that worked their way up the minor league hockey ladder. By staying connected to his sport through coaching, Henry was able to achieve a level of satisfaction through hockey that was similar to what he felt when he was a player.

Developing Coaching Style

The third major area of investigation extracted from the data was developing coaching style. This theme represented some of the key elements that Henry learned as a former player and incorporated into his style of coaching. Henry felt that the development of an effective coaching style would foster a more positive relationship with his players. The corresponding sub areas of discussion that supported this major area of discussion

included: (a) approach to training camp, (b) being honest, (c) not overextending oneself, (d) recruiting players you respect, and (e) having former teammates as allies.

Approach to training camp. When asked about his role in preseason, Henry identified training camp as the first signal to him that being a coach was going to be much different than being a player. More specifically, when he reflected back on training camp, he indicated that his expectations might not have been realistic with respect to the players he was now coaching. Through this process, Henry realized he needed to take a more hands-on approach to coaching. He said,

> I did training camp the way I would have wanted training camp done if I was a player and I think that was a big mistake. Not taking away anything from the players these days, but they need more time on the ice. They need more teaching. For me, I didn't really, at the minor league level, never, obviously not the NHL level, but the [minor professional hockey league level], I used training camp to get in shape. I didn't use it to work on my hands, to work on my skills. It was just a time for me to get into shape. With these guys here, they need time to work on their hands, work on their feet, work on their game, work on systems, and like I said again, not taking away anything from the players at this level these days, but they don't seem to have the same instincts and feel for the game that I did. I just used training camp to get in shape. These guys need it more than just getting in shape.

Henry further realized the need to alter his coaching style to adequately adjust to the type of players he had on the team. He said,

> I think it took awhile for me to get my feet wet and figure things out as a coach. Once again, the mistakes I made were thinking that things would kind of run themselves and the way I played was a lot on anticipation and instincts. Every player is not like that. Every player is different. Players these days, at this level, they need a lot more direction. Some guys need a boot in the ass. Some guys need a pat on the back. Some guys need to be talked to every day to make them feel very good about themselves. And some guys you leave alone. It took me awhile to figure out that, I treated everyone pretty much the same. Next year, going into it, I am going to try and get to know people a little bit earlier on in the season and then get to know their personalities a little better. I think that is where I struggled the first couple of months.

One of the important tasks when undertaking any new endeavor is to develop a leadership style that best suits the needs of the leader and the group members (Chelladurai, 1993). Henry claimed that it was important to implement some of the key elements he learned as an eleven year professional into his style of coaching. Through this he felt that he would be better able to foster a positive and trusting relationship with his players.

According to Chelladurai (1993) a leader's actual behavior is influenced by his personality, experience and ability in addition to the demands of the situation. It was not surprising then that Henry made training camp easy based on the fact that: a) he disliked training camp as a player, and b) several of his veteran players were not prepared for a rigorous training camp. However, in this case, Henry recognized that both his players' performances and satisfaction levels were below his own expectations for camp and that

he needed to adjust his coaching style to better assist some of the players who needed more attention.

Being honest. Henry felt that being honest with his players, both his former teammates and new players, was essential for gaining their trust and respect. He described this sense of honesty when he stated, "You have to be honest whether the news is positive or not so positive. You just tell them the truth… I just want to be upfront and honest. That is my policy as a coach, because I know I was lied to day in and day out as a player."

Not overextending oneself. Throughout Henry's description of the transition from player to coach, and how that transition affected the coach-athlete relationship, he mentioned that a lot of coaches get into trouble because they make false promises to their players. He suggested that this overextension of oneself can have a detrimental impact on a coach's credibility. He stated,

> Don't overextend yourself and say 'I'm going to give you this, I am going to do this' if you know you can't do that. I've always just tried to say, 'Hey, this is what I have, this is what I can give to you.' I would never try to overextend myself, whether that be financially or anything.

Henry also indicated that he viewed being honest and not overextending himself as two of the most fundamental components to developing his coaching style. By being honest with his players, he felt that he would be able to gain their trust and respect. This seems to be in agreement with the findings of Gould, Greenleaf, Guinan, and Chung (2002) that coaches who believed in their ability to adequately coach athletes and teams were able to establish trust with their players, remain calm under pressure, and make

reasonable but crucial decisions. Had Henry made several promises to his players that he was unable to deliver, it would likely have hindered his credibility and create an emotional distance between him and his players.

Recruiting players you respect. Henry felt that it was important to recruit players he respected both professionally and personally. Specifically, he looked for players who had both a strong work ethic and a positive personality. By recruiting players he respected and who shared his values, Henry was able to experience a more positive coach-athlete relationship [with new players]. He stated,

> The key is to have people who you bring back who you played with…that you respect as people and as players. And they understand you know…the different mindset and more responsibilities and with all the guys…from [player] down to [another player] they knew that.

He wanted to bring in players that shared his values and philosophies, which would in turn, foster a stronger coach-athlete relationship. His feelings on recruiting such players is consistent with Jowett and Meek's (2000) notion of closeness that comes with feelings of respect, commitment and belief in the coach-athlete relationship. Because Henry had a strong relationship with some of his former teammates he had experienced levels of closeness with them that made him want to bring them back when he became coach. In addition, he already had a level of genuine concern and respect for these players, which further reinforced a trusting and committed relationship (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Schinke, & Salmela, 1998).

Former teammates as allies. In his first season, Henry felt it was important for his former teammates to demonstrate unity and devotion regardless of whether they agreed

with him or not. He believed that this unwavering loyalty would foster a smooth transition for him from player to coach. He stated,

> I told them, too, 'Well, even if you don't agree with something I say to the team, you guys are going to have to back me. You will have to be in the locker room and make sure that…you guys are the backbone of the team'. The five or six core guys that came back, and whom I played with. 'If you don't agree with something I say or something I do, that's fine, but don't say it to the other guys. Just come in my office and tell me and then at some point, if I agree with what you said, then things may get changed'. But the key is, especially as a rookie coach, especially with guys who you played with, is that whether they agree with you or not, they support you in front of the other teammates and young players.

Henry felt that a critical component to his success as a first-year coach was having his former teammates trust the decisions he made. He believed that having these athletes to help him implement decisions, despite the hardships that ensued early in the season (i.e., the team starting 2-7, ownership putting pressure on the team/coach to perform, taking the captaincy away from Steve), eased his transition from player to coach. This in turn fostered a stronger, more cohesive coach-athlete relationship. Henry said,

> '…you gotta make sure that the guys you bring back, you have 100% trust and that you believe that they…whether they agree with what you say or not, they are going to have your back in the locker room.' They are going to buy into the system you present to the team. Whether you have 15 systems or 15 power play breakouts or if you have 1 system with 1 power play breakout, you have to make sure they buy into those systems. If they don't, they have the power and capability

> to collapse your whole…every single theory you throw at your players, every single idea. A young kid, first or second kid year pro, will look at an older guy and say, 'that's a 32-year-old who has played for ten years who isn't buying into his system, or isn't listening to him, then neither am I!'

Henry further explained how the mistakes he made as a first-year coach could have been disastrous had it not been for the strong core of former teammates who stuck with him through the early struggles. This reciprocal unity helped strengthen the relationship he had with his players. He stated,

> So you have to make sure that you believe in the older guys or the guys you played with are going to believe you and stay with you no matter. Whether the ship goes down or stays afloat. Without a doubt, these guys this year did that. The way we started off with me, and I am the first to admit when I made a mistake, when I screw up. I went in there, you can play hockey your whole life, but you don't know what to expect when you go behind the bench. Those guys never bailed. They stuck with me. We stuck together and made it work. The oldest cliché in sports is it is not how you start, but how you finish. We finished strong. Those guys are the ones who stuck it out with me. I will stick it out with them down the road. That's what pays off in sports.

Through this understanding and loyalty demonstrated by veteran players, Henry was able to achieve a united locker room that included both the old and the new players on the team. This is consistent with the notion that the more harmonious base from which the coach and his players view their environment, based on negotiation and understanding, the more their mutual relationship will develop (Clark & Reis, 1988).

Moreover, with greater lines of communication open, the level of trust and respect generally increases between players and coach (Yukelson, 1984). This, in turn, fosters a stronger and more cohesive coach-athlete relationship (Carron & Bennett, 1977).

Renegotiating Personal Relationship (Players)

The sub areas of discussion in this category represented factors related to the players' experiences of having Henry transition from teammate to coach and how in their view that transition impacted the coach-athlete relationship. These sub areas of discussion included: (a) proving oneself, (b) sticking together, (c) similar interests, and (d) redefining social relationships.

Proving oneself. All of the players in this study were previous teammates of Henry and had various degrees of relationship with him. Many of them mentioned how that relationship affected the way they approached Henry in their new coach-athlete relationship. More specifically, two participants expressed comforted at the fact that they did not have the added pressure of proving themselves to a coach who had no idea about their ability. Steve stated:

> When I found out that [Henry] was the head coach I was excited, because I have an opportunity to play for a guy that was a friend of mine and somebody who…You know you always want to play for a coach that knows what your abilities are. You always have to prove yourself regardless, but it's nice to play for a coach that you've proven yourself in front of already. That was a good feeling for me because he knew my situation, that I lived here in [city name], I wanted to play here, I proved myself as a player to him last year…

It appears that because of this previous relationship with Henry, these two players felt less pressure to prove themselves on the ice. They spoke often about how beneficial it was that he already knew their skills and demeanor as players. This finding seems to be consistent with Molnar's (2002) finding that Division I athletes who had a prior relationship with the coach (e.g., the head coach being replaced by an assistant coach), the transition process was characterized by reduced uncertainty. One can assume that because of the tenuous nature of contracts in minor league hockey, having a coach who is already familiar with your playing style can alleviate a lot of the fear that would normally be associated with trying out for a team.

Conversely, a couple of the participants who felt they did not have as strong of a relationship with Henry as a teammate the previous year perceived his hiring as the head coach had a negative impact on the resulting coach-athlete relationship. Both players felt that their lack of a relationship with Henry left them in a tenable position heading into training camp. Terrier mentioned:

> I didn't like him to be honest with you. I thought he was an ass. I remember him always ripping on college hockey players and stuff like that…I didn't know what [coach] thought of me so I didn't know where I would be playing.

This finding seems to be consistent with Molnar's (2002) "frustration of the unknown" notion, that not having a previous relationship with the incoming coach may lead to feelings of uncertainty about one's future on the team.

Felix was also unsure about his relationship with Henry and, in turn, had reservations about his position on the team. He stated:

> My first thought was 'uh-oh', because I had a pretty good relationship with the previous coach. I knew [that] had that coach come back, I would still have a job here for sure, with no doubt in my mind that I would be playing again in [current city] if I wanted to. The first thing that went through my mind was, 'Am I still going to be playing here?' I said I consider him my friend, but he is not a person that I hang out with or sit down and have a conversation with. So I was not sure what he thought of me as a hockey player. I guess I didn't have the greatest reaction because I was comfortable with what we had. Not that I didn't think he could do a good job or was going to do a good job, or even do a bad job, I didn't know because he was going to be a first-year head coach. My feeling of security kind of left me.

Felix's feelings of uncertainty seems to concur with Molnar's (2002) finding that surprise and shock are common feelings of athletes during a coaching transition. Molnar (2002) suggested that transitions for certain players (i.e., rookies) may be more difficult than for athletes who have a more stable spot on the team. Therefore, athletes in these tenable situations need to be provided as much information as possible about the coaching change and be encouraged to let their voice be heard during the hiring process. This may involve conversing with teammates and developing a course of action to best prepare for the upcoming season. In Felix's case, he called to congratulate Henry and placed feelers out regarding where he stood for the following year.

Sticking together. Two players stated that having played with Henry the previous year prompted them to "stick together" rather than splinter during periods of difficulty. Sticking together had a positive influence on the coach-athlete relationship. Mark stated,

"But being that we played together, and you know, he knew the caliber of guys we were, and the type of guys we were, he stuck with us and we stuck with him, through the hard times, made the easy times so much better." Steve said, "…he stayed loyal to me through my tough times and I've stayed loyal to him through his tough times and that's not only being a respectful player and coach, but also that kind of shows, you know, the friendship factor there, too."

Earlier, Henry mentioned the importance of having players remain loyal and united despite potential differences in philosophies. Due to their previous relationship the players were more inclined to support Henry in his decision making processes. Both the players and Henry felt this was critical to the team's success. Thus, it seems important for researchers to better understand how the athlete contributes to the bi-directional relationship with the coach (Gardner, 1995; Wylleman, 2000). The players are not merely being acted upon. In order for the team to be successful it was imperative that his players stuck with him through good times and bad. The players also felt this to be important.

Similar interests. Two players expressed that having a coach with similar interests as their own had a positive impact on the coach-athlete relationship and, in turn, made the process of returning to play for another season more enjoyable. Mark stated, "He is only two years older than me. We played in the same leagues together and things like that. We have a lot of the same interests…" Steve also mentioned being able to discuss outside interests with Henry, which contributed to his positive perceptions of their coach-athlete relationship. He said, "We talk about, you know, our girlfriends and we talk about, uh, the weather, we talk about movies. You know what I mean; we don't even talk about hockey. I think that it's the best thing to do."

Both Mark and Steve mentioned being able to communicate with Henry on both formal (sport related) and informal (non-sports related) topics. Jowett and Meek (2000) have proposed the construct of co-orientation that suggests that when there is a close proximity and feelings of respect between coaches and athletes the communication process is easier to develop. It seems that these two players felt they had similar interests, as Henry may lead one to assume they would be more willing to work towards common goals during both positive and negative time periods.

Redefining social relationships. Each participant was asked to describe his relationship with the coach as a former teammate and presently as the head coach. Several of the players mentioned that their relationship with Henry as a former teammate was very similar to that of their new coach-athlete relationship. For example, Mark said, "[Coach] and I are good friends. We hung out quite a bit away from the rink. We had a few cocktails together. We hung out. He and I were pretty good friends." Steve also felt that the relationship he had with his coach did not change. He mentioned, "[Henry] and I still had the same relationship off the ice." Ferris remarked,

> He still finds time to hang out with some of the guys; it just can't be team functions where he's out partying with the guys and some of the younger guys. He'll lay back a little bit. A lot of the younger guys like to go out. You know, [coach] is a laid-back guy and he likes to do that, too. So, not at all. There might be some times during the year when he's willing to come with ones he's played with and been friends with but I know that's part of it. It's not going to affect our relationship with him.

Conversely, Felix and Terrier felt that due to the new responsibilities assigned to their former teammate, the coach-athlete relationship had changed. Felix remarked,

> He had to pull back and realize that if you do become too engaged with your players, that there could be some repercussions and you do, as a coach, have to set some guidelines and some boundaries, between that player and coach relationship. Otherwise, he risks having friends take advantage of him.

Terrier felt that Henry's ability to maintain boundaries with his former teammates (despite having a close bond with some of them) had a positive influence on his experience of the coach-athlete relationship. He said,

> I know he tried to keep the coach-player thing and he did a really good job of that actually. He wouldn't come out to the places we went and stuff. He tried to separate himself. It's tough. He played so long. He's fresh off the game. It's guys he played with last year, guys he'd played against before and stuff, so he knew guys really well and you know, when you go through the year with the same group of guys you become pretty close. It's tough to make that transition and cut that cord. For me, I only had 2 months with him and I wasn't the starter so my connection with him wasn't as big as other guys.

Henry's ability to remove himself from his former role, mentioned another player, made the coach-athlete relationship much more beneficial for all involved. Molnar (2002) contended that the realization of the role transition for a former teammate who becomes the coach would help players understand that there is a shift in the relationship and that the coach needs to be looked at as a coach and no longer as a friend.

Role Transition

Several of the participants discussed the role transition of their former teammate who had become the coach and how this transition affected the coach-athlete relationship. This theme was divided into three sub areas of discussions: (a) increased leadership role, (b) increased autonomy, and (c) liaison between players and coach.

Increased leadership role. Many of the players in this study felt that their role on the team increased once their former teammate took over the head coaching position. Henry's awareness of their interests as players and his willingness to give them the opportunity to be leaders had a positive affect on the coach-athlete relationship. Mark stated,

> I wanted to be player-assistant coach, right, just to kind of get my foot inside the door. He had done that in the past, as a player-assistant in the past, which helped me out. He kind of knew the direction I was going in. I just kind of wanted to know the other side of what coaching was about.

Steve felt that Henry's decision to look to him to assume a greater mentoring position for some of the younger players enhanced their coach-athlete relationship. He stated,

> He looked at me as a key signee on the team, and looked at me as a player to be a leader. So, I kind of wanted to set the tempo right from the first day of training camp and show him that I was going to work hard for him and at the same time set the tone for some of the younger guys on the team.

These players appreciated having this previous relationship with Henry because he then trusted them and believed in their ability to help in the player selection process.

Poczwardowski, Barott, and Henschen (2002) have emphasized that trust, respect and belief are core building tools in the coach-athlete relationship. These players seemed to enjoy knowing that Henry trusted and respected them and that they "had some input in helping bring guys in". It comes as little surprise that the players who desired the greater leadership duties were the ones that were closest to Henry when they were teammates. Henry's ability to recognize and foster these players' desires to assume a more influential role on the team positively affected their coach-athlete relationship as Henry was demonstrating leadership qualities that were consistent with the players' desires.

Increased autonomy. All the veteran players in this study discussed enjoying the increased autonomy they had as a result of their former teammate being coach. They discussed being able to help run practices and meetings in Henry's absence as something that positively impacted the coach-athlete relationship. They appreciated having a previous relationship with Henry that paved the way to their increased roles on the team. Ferris enjoyed being afforded the trust by Henry to make certain player personnel decisions, a decision that he felt enhanced their coach-athlete relationship. He explained, "I played for three years and now basically have the freedom to tell [Henry] about a player and say I know someone or to make certain suggestions." Mark also indicated, "This is the first time I have ever played for a buddy of mine. So it was kind of different at first, but kind of good in a way knowing that I had some input in helping bring guys in here, helping form the team here, and helping out in practices…" Felix noted how this increased autonomy really improved his coach-athlete relationship. He said,

> …but the fact that he asked me about certain players made me feel good, made me feel like I was really an important part of the team. Basically, all it was was

> him throwing around names and asking what that player was like in the locker room, what other guys thought of them, what our perception was of his skill level. What he thought good and bad he would bring to the team, whichever person he was asking about.

Steve also appreciated being asked for his input in creating practice schedules. He said:

> So, every day, we were in contact more on a level of evaluating some of the younger kids who were on the bubble to make the team. But, he also asked, "hey do you think we are going too hard, do you think we need to go harder, do you think we need to change some of the drills?" It was kind of cool, because I've never had that kind of input before…being a player, so he really respected mine and [teammate's] input on everything from players to how long we should skate to what drills we should do, to how long scrimmages should be…so it was kind of cool.

Two players felt that Henry trusted players to ready themselves for games and gave them the freedom to express themselves on the ice, something they felt would not have been provided had they not had a prior relationship with Henry. This autonomy to express oneself positively impacted the coach-athlete relationship for some of the players. Ferris pointed out that he appreciated the freedom Henry gave him to experiment when on the ice. He stated, "[Henry] kind of, which I really liked as a coach, let me do my own thing. He knows I am going to try my hardest, he knows when I know I mess up, he knows that I can do this. He just puts his faith in me to just go out and do it."

The players felt that trust came a lot easier because of the previous relationship that they had with Henry. This is consistent with Jowett and Meek's (2000) finding that the coach's belief in the athlete's sport abilities seems to be related to the level of closeness the coach shares with that athlete. While in their study Jowett and Meek focused on coaches and athletes who were married, the present findings suggest that a similar connection between a coach's belief in and closeness to an athlete is generalizable to other coach athlete dyads.

Liaison between players and coach. Mark and Ferris discussed how their former teammates' appointment as coach afforded them the opportunity to act as a liaison between Henry and younger players, an experience that they felt enhanced their coach-athlete relationship. Mark indicated, "but now with him as head coach, it is like 'okay, I've got to run this team now, I need you to be looked upon as a more of a leader that helps me in getting these guys to go.' We had to step up our roles a little more and help out." Ferris mentioned:

> I can tell him what I think and he'll listen and he'll tell me what he thinks. Like with a lot of the guys you have a coach that you can talk to the whole year; if something is wrong, he would bring up a couple of the older guys and say 'look here's what's going on, this is what we need to do, this is what we need to change to help you guys to relay this message and make sure it happens.' We know that's our job. It's not a problem for [coach] to come and tell us that.

Being included in team decision-making activities seemed to help foster these players' trust and loyalty which is characteristic of leaders who adopt a consultative decision style (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1978). Coaches who adopt this style allow greater

participation by players in decisions regarding strategies and team goals (Salminen & Liukkonen, 1996). The present findings suggest that the style may be particularly effective with veteran players.

Developing Coaching Style

This major area of discussion represented some of the players' perceptions about the coaching strategies employed by Henry, including techniques, drills, expectations and personality, and how they viewed these strategies both positively and negatively. The major area of discussion of developing coaching style was separated into four sub areas of discussion: (a) approach to training camp, (b) coach as a player, (c) interaction style, and (d) difficulty controlling emotions.

Approach to training camp. All of the players in this study were asked about their experience with training camp. Each indicated that their experience had influenced their relationship with their coach. Some of the players felt that this experience was a learning experience for Henry but that it did not lead to a poor coach-athlete relationship. Mark stated that training camp was not "as tough as it should have been…We had a training camp the way we liked it [laughing], instead of having it the way we should have had it. We learned not to have it like that ever again." Felix also felt that training camp was very different than in years past, which was due to Henry's laidback attitude. He mentioned:

> It was very different than in years past. I think, number one reason is the type of person and the type of player he was. Training camp was considerably easier than in years before. Coach is more of a laidback person, as opposed to [previous year's coach]. I don't think it was because he didn't want his players to get in shape or to not work as hard. It was just that he always hated doing too much

> during training camp, where guys get hurt and [suffered] injuries that could be prevented. He kind of went that route and let the guys ease into the season as opposed to working them tirelessly and burning them out and possibly having pulled hamstrings or groins in preseason camps.

Terrier felt that the reason the season started so poorly for the team was due to the inexperience of the first year coach and the lack of effort put forth by the veteran players. Training camp was one area where Henry's inexperience was evident. He stated, "Training camp was an absolute joke. It was an absolute sham, you know, nobody got into shape…It started out rough because we had a first year coach so that doesn't help. Our leaders weren't in shape. They hadn't done anything all summer."

The opinions offered regarding the success of training camp varied across participants. It is not surprising that these opinions differed, as both the players and coaches all had different ideas about the goal of the camp. Henry and a couple of veteran players desired a camp that was not too strenuous and would allow them to gradually get back into shape while other players seemed to desire a more rigorous camp that would prepare the team for success during the season. There were "ongoing negotiations" between Henry and some of his players in an attempt to establish a common ground (Pocwardowski, Barott, & Henschen, 2002) for camp. As a result of the attempts to find a common ground, there were misunderstandings, conflicts and a lack of a central goal during the camp, which may have contributed to the difficulties the team faced early in the season.

Coach as a player. Several of the players discussed how fortunate they felt playing for someone with whom they could relate. These players all perceived that

playing for a coach who had gone through what they were currently experiencing as players had a positive influence on the coach-athlete relationship. Mark stated,

> I find that guys who played the game at the NHL or at the next level, they are more of a players' coach. They played the game and realize what it takes to win and the practice routine, things like that. Three games in three nights, the next day you either don't play, or the next day it is a light skate.

Ferris described the way in which playing for a coach who used to be a player influenced his relationship with Henry. He indicated, "I guess sometimes you get really lucky like this year with [Henry]. I was just very lucky to have a guy like him and I did last year too with [previous coach's name]. He was more of a player's coach just getting done playing and he knows how to play." Felix specifically spoke about his appreciation of having a coach who really takes the players' best interests to heart. He stated, "…he is what you would call a 'players' coach'. He is very good to his players. He makes sure they get everything that they really need, as far as equipment and anything else that the player may need."

Throughout the players' discussion about their experience playing for a coach who used to be their teammate was a description of how beneficial it was that Henry had a player's mindset. Steve stated,

> I liked the fact that because [Henry] was just a player last year and he was moving right into a coach, he still had that player mentality in the back of his head. So he knew sometimes that there were times to back off, and times where you can't really push your players to the point that they can't even go anymore. You know, he respected our limits, and he didn't keep the training camps 3, 4, 5 hours like a

> lot of teams do. Because when you are on the ice for 4-5 hours a day you are so tired you can't perform. You just can't do it. And he knew that, which was great because he was a player last year and he respected the fact that the guys were tired. And, when we needed a little bit of rest he would give us some rest and so I loved that. [Henry] just coming off being a player he knew how to handle situations like that, you know better than maybe coaches who haven't played in 10-15 years.

Some of the players felt that they were more receptive to his coaching suggestions due to the respect they had for him as a player. Referring to Henry, Terrier mentioned, "The guy's been around and played a long time. Put in a lot of years so you have to respect that." Felix stated,

> I respected his hockey ability and hockey background. He played the game at a pretty high level for 10 or 11 years and I was in my third year of pro hockey so I learned a few things from him, just listening to some of his stories he told, kind of the way that it was when he first broke into the minor leagues.

A couple of the players appreciated the fact that Henry was able to put playing hockey into perspective. They mentioned that he was able to get his players to connect with the enjoyable reasons for playing the sport, which was something they felt might not have occurred with another new coach. Henry's ability to do this seemed to positively impact his relationship with his players. Steve mentioned,

> He always stressed to us, 'you guys are not playing hockey to get rich you know which we're not because we don't make much money.' He said 'you guys are playing because you love the game.' And he says, 'you know you have to have

> fun out here to succeed.' I couldn't agree more. The best thing in the world is showing up in practice with a nice loose atmosphere. Going out there working hard and having fun and he made it fun for us this year because he always stressed guys you can work hard and have fun at the same time. I've never really had coaches that did that in the past.

Several of the players stated how fortunate they were to play for someone with whom they could relate. They all mentioned how beneficial it was playing for someone who "really takes the players' best interests to heart." They considered themselves lucky to be playing for such a "players' coach". They also appreciated the fact that Henry was very recently a player and could, therefore, relate to all the trials and tribulations that came with playing minor league hockey. This seems to be in agreement with Poczwardowski, Barott, and Henschen (2002) who mentioned that coaches who are more willing to share their own experiences with their athletes increase the likelihood that the athletes will positively relate to them. More specifically, this type of sharing may lead to other ways of discovering commonalities between coaches and athletes that may broaden the depth of their relationship. All the players in this study perceived that having someone who had experienced the same things that they have, both on and off the ice, made them more willing to accept his decisions.

Interaction style. Several of the players discussed the manner in which Henry communicated with his players. More specifically, two felt that Henry's ability to do this - be honest and upfront with his players while at the same time treating the players the same as when they were teammates - enhanced the coach-athlete relationship. Steve reverentially called his coach a "straight shooter." "Straight shooter" refers to the honest

manner in which Henry communicated with his players. Each participant indicated that they appreciated this type of communication style and felt Henry's honesty helped him gain the respect of his current players. Mark stated,

> [Henry] is a straight up shooter. He tells it how it is. If you like it, you like it, if you don't, you don't. Take it as it is. If you are not man enough to take criticism or anything from him, he knows that and he will have no part with you. The guys that he did keep around were guys that he liked off the ice as well as on the ice, so that is why he kept these guys around.

Felix echoed his teammate's sentiment. He felt that having had a previous relationship with Henry when he was a player permitted Henry to provide a more honest evaluation of Felix's performance, which is something Felix felt positively impacted their relationship. He stated,

> Having a previous relationship was beneficial to me. I do think he treated me better than had he not known me. But, in the same sense, he didn't give me any more breaks than another guy. He didn't let me off the hook for anything because I screwed up. He would still tell me. But in the same sense it was easier for him to talk to me and vice versa, it was easier for me to talk to him, because we had a relationship.

Ferris discussed how much he valued the feedback that Henry was willing to provide regardless of the situation. "He can tell you straight up if something is wrong or something's not wrong." Conversely, Terrier (who was upset about his lack of playing time earlier in the year) felt his relationship benefited after Henry decided to stand by his

word and provided him an opportunity to advance to another league despite the fact that it would hurt Henry's own coaching record. He mentioned,

> …[Team in higher league] phoned and asked for a [position name] and they wanted [another person] and he said, 'no you want this kid, he's better, he's playing better.' You know, I give him props for that because he gave away the [other player] that was winning for him. There's a lot of coaches that wouldn't do that. He's one that stands by his word and tries to live up to his word… I got to give him that, he stuck by his… he wants his guys to do well and improve and move up. That's something that a lot of coaches aren't like.

Several of the participants in the study mentioned the manner in which Henry communicated with them. Even though some had a stronger relationship with Henry based on their experience as teammates, they all mentioned how Henry was able to provide equal forms of criticism and praise regardless of their previous relationship. In addition, the participants felt that Henry's ability to be honest and upfront with his feedback of players' performance helped to enhance their relationship. This finding seems to be consistent with those of Allen and Howe (1998) who found that coaches who provide encouragement, instructional feedback, and other forms of positive reinforcement, achieve higher ratings of athlete satisfaction with both the coach and the playing environment. In addition, Poczwardowski, Barott, and Henschen (2002) found that "trust, respect, and belief have been found as both the product and the building tools in the athlete-coach relationship" (p.127). In some cases having a previous relationship as a teammate allowed Henry's players to trust in his evaluations and feedback as a coach.

Difficulty controlling emotions. Several players in this study felt that their former teammate had difficulties making the transition from teammate to coach. They perceived this difficulty as having a negative impact on the coach-athlete relationship. They mentioned that it was a learning process for Henry, specifically with regards to managing his emotions and recognizing that he could not personally affect the outcome of the games. As Felix stated,

> I think it was a learning process for him. I know one thing he had trouble with as a first-year coach being a player the year before was controlling his emotions on the bench. I know even he mentioned that as a player when you get frustrated, whether you got too high or too low, whatever, there was an outlet on the ice. There is always the next shift, the next game or the next practice. But as a coach, he felt he didn't have enough control, even though there wasn't anything more he could do. It was tough for him to adjust from a playing aspect to just being a coach, where he can't physically make the play happen.

Terrier offered a more critical evaluation of Henry. He felt that with the pressures of being a first-year coach coupled with the team performing very poorly early in the season it was understandable that Henry was somewhat stressed. However, he felt that the manner in which Henry handled himself during this period had a negative impact on their relationship. Terrier said,

> I think he was a train wreck to be honest with you. He was so up and down. It seemed like a roller coaster ride every day. Everyday, he was getting pressures that he had never seen before. Like, I can't imagine what the owners were saying to him because I think we were 1-7 at one time. He was a rookie coach, he could

be gone right away. Last thing he wants to start off is going to be fired in the first month. So I'm sure his mind must have been going loopy and you could tell he's the type of guy that wears it right on his sleeve so you know exactly how he's feeling…

But, Terrier went on to state:

He's trying to get us going and trying to skate us and do anything good to make us play better and it wasn't necessarily his fault. It was the group really. It's the guys not showing up in shape. Not caring. Taking it as a joke. I think a lot of the guys were buddies with him so they might have taken a little more advantage than with a coach they didn't know. So it wasn't all his fault. But, I know he was an absolute mess. You could tell he was just stressing out and losing his mind.

Terrier's relationship with Henry was affected by the manner in which Henry managed his emotions both during the game and off the ice. Pocwardowski, Barott, and Henschen (2002), found that when the interaction between players and coach is negative in nature, players report feelings of personal dissatisfaction and discomfort. In this case, Terrier and Henry did not spend a lot of time communicating or interacting. There was little interaction on either person's part (particularly with regards to non-hockey related activities), which, in this case, allowed the negative feelings to fester. One can assume that having little to no relationship with Henry the previous year hindered the manner in which some players communicated with him during the next season.

Terrier also felt that despite the team getting off to a poor start, Henry could have acted a little more professional and maintained control. He believed that the way Henry handled himself during the early part of the season made it difficult to establish the right

relationship with other players, especially Terrier. He felt that Henry was overly negative with his players and did not deal with the stress he was experiencing as the team started out 1-7. However, it should be noted that Terrier was one player who did not have a strong previous relationship with Henry and his playing time was limited during the early part of the year. Both of these factors may have contributed to his negative portrayal of Henry.

Summary

The main areas of discussion that emerged from the experience of going from a teammate to coach were relatively uniform for both the coach and players. While the major areas of discussion: 1) negotiating personal relationships, 2) role transition, and 3) developing coaching style were the same for both coach and players, the supporting sub areas of discussion differed. For the coach, these areas of discussion centered around his experience transitioning from player to coach and the nuances of learning a new role. For the players, the experience of having a former teammate become their coach was characterized by new roles, identities and responsibilities that came with transition. However, the responses of both the players and coach suggested that their experience was unique to this type of coach-athlete relationship. In the next chapter, I provide conclusions and recommendations for future research in this area followed by practical implications for those interested in applied aspects of the field.

Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this investigation was to gain a better understanding of the relationship between a transitioning coach (and former player) and his athletes. Of particular interest was the experience of the transition from both the players' and the coach's perspectives. Five current professional hockey players and one former player (the current coach) participated in semi-structured interviews. An interpretive analysis was incorporated to categorize the responses into a thematic structure. The resulting major areas of discussion for both coach and players included: (a) renegotiating personal relationships, (b) role transition, and (c) developing a coaching style. In this chapter, conclusions and recommendations are offered followed by practical implications for coaches and sport psychology consultants.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be made: (a) the coach felt that it was essential to redefine the boundaries of his relationship with his former teammates in order to effectively coach his players. That process involved learning how to socialize differently with his players and learning how to more effectively communicate with his players; (b) the coach learned the importance of only focusing on things he can control now as a coach. Those included changing his game plans and strategy, recruiting players he respects and working on his interpersonal skills; (c) the players' experience of the transition varied according to the type of relationship they had with the coach when he was a teammate. Some mentioned relishing the increased role and responsibilities placed on them by the coach and the resulting sense of

loyalty they experienced. Others felt frustrated and unsure of their role on the team. However, all players emphasized and appreciated the honest and direct communication style that the coach exhibited.

Future Research Recommendations

As previously mentioned, no research exists that has addressed the transition of an athlete going from teammate to coach on the same team. Being involved in minor league hockey means contracts are not guaranteed and players are often interchangeable. Players and coaches like the ones in this study offer insight into the transition of going from teammate to coach and the importance of trust and communication in developing relationships between the coach and his former teammates. Participants in this study discussed the various ways in which the coach-athlete relationship can be affected in such an environment. However, future research is needed to determine whether the experiences of the participants in this study can be generalized to other sports, where a teammate becomes the head coach.

It would be useful to interview coaches of other sports, such as baseball and basketball, where it is more common for players to take on a role of coaching once their playing career is over. It would also be of value to interview players who were not previous teammates of the coach to see if their perceptions of the coach-athlete relationship is any different from that of players who were former teammates. In addition, it would also be interesting to interview female athletes and athletes of color regarding their experience of coaching transitions.

In summary, recent research has attempted to gain a better understanding of athletes' relationships with coaches. However, little remains known of athletes' actual

experiences with their coach, especially during transitions. Thus, there is a need for researchers to hear the "voices" of the athletes to gain a better understanding of their experiences with their coach (Patton, 1990).

Implications for Sport Psychology Consultants

Sport psychology consultants have the opportunity to help athletes and coaches reach their full potential in sport and in life. However, in order to do this, consultants must first understand the coach-athlete relationship and how each individual responds to a variety of situations, including coaching transitions. Effective sport psychology consultants should attempt to learn as much as they can about the athletes and coaches they work with and encourage them to consider the impact of their working relationship on their performance (Brustad & Ritter-Taylor, 1997). According to Vernacchia, McGuire, Reardon, & Templin (2000), the coach-athlete relationship is an essential component coaches need to consider when dealing with athletes' performance. As stated by Vernacchia, McGuire, and Cook (1996), the ability of the coach to foster the holistic development of the athlete "…is the key to unlocking the door to athletic abilities and potentials" (p.5).

Research has shown that professional hockey organizations have begun utilizing sport psychology consultants to help strengthen players' mental skills (Botterill, 1990; Dunn & Holt, 2003; Halliwell, 1990; Rogerson & Hrycaiko, 2002). These consultants work with athletes on their mental skills training in an attempt to increase confidence, attentional focus, and emotional management (Botterill, 1990; Halliwell, 1990). Many consultants who work with hockey coaches emphasize the importance of developing a strong, trusting relationship with athletes (Baillie & Ogilvie, 1996; Botterill, 1990)

through active listening and the incorporation of a more holistic approach (Balague, 1999; Martens, Mobley, & Zizzi, 2000). Despite such calls for a greater focus on the interpersonal side of hockey consultation (Botterill, 1990), many consultants spend the majority of their time preparing the athlete for actual on-ice performance.

In conclusion, consultants who are interested in developing effective relationships with athletes must appreciate how important the coach-athlete relationship is to the athlete. As discussed by Vealey, Hayashi, Garner-Holman and Giacobbi (1998), support and social evaluation from coaches, teammates, and family can have a dramatic affect on the state of mind (particularly with regards to self-confidence and perceived competence) of the athlete. The coach-athlete relationship was important to the players in this study because it increased their level of satisfaction playing the game, they were more relaxed because they were afforded more freedom to experiment on the ice, and how important and valued they felt regarding decision making processes. Recently, when talking with three Canadian semi-professional hockey players living in the United States, it became clear to me that their experiences off the ice, background variables (i.e., having teammates and coaches with similar backgrounds), and a knowledgeable coach helped make their experiences on the ice more positive. Therefore, it seems important for sport psychology researchers and consultants to acknowledge how really important the relationship between coach and athlete is, particularly for the athlete, when studying and working with hockey players.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Informed Consent

This is a research study that will look at the coach-athlete relationship and is partial fulfillment of the Masters Degree requirements in sport psychology for Ashwin J. Patel. During the interview, you will be asked about your relationship with your coach/a player when he was your teammate and the relationship you have with him now as your coach/as a player. The interview will be open-ended and informal in nature and will take between approximately forty-five minutes and one hour. The interview will be recorded using a digital audio recorder and then transcribed. You will have the opportunity to peruse the transcribed interview and offer any additional comments that you may have neglected to mention earlier. The information provided will then be thematized and coded into categories for research purposes. All discussions taking place during the interviews will be kept private and confidential and used only for research purposes. Only the primary researcher and members of his research team will be permitted access to the transcripts. Every effort will be taken to maintain your anonymity. Only with your consent will your name be used in any published report.

Furthermore, the audio taped interview will be digitally transferred and copied onto a compact disc. It will be locked and stored in a cabinet in the office of the principal investigator until November 2004 to allow adequate time for the interview to be transcribed. After this process is completed the compact disc will be destroyed.

I have had the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the purpose of the study and have been informed that I may ask any clarifying questions throughout the study. This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board and that I may call Brenda Lawson at Research Compliance Services (865-974-3466) if I have any questions.

I, _____ (print name), acknowledge that the research procedures described have been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been informed of all procedures in the study. I know that I may ask now, or in the future, any questions I have about the study or the research procedures. I have been assured that records relating to me will be kept confidential and no information will be released or printed that would disclose my personal identity without my permission. I understand that participation is strictly voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at time without pressure or prejudice.

Signature_____ Date_____

Witness_____ Date_____

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Appendix B - Interview Protocol

Introduction

To start, I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. I don't really have a specific answer that I am trying to find. I am very interested in learning about the coach-athlete relationship. Specifically, I would like to know more about how your previous relationship with him as a teammate last year affected your relationship with him this year. However, before I get to those questions, I would like to learn a little more about you.

Background Questions:

(start with age, ethnicity, race, citizenship, brothers and sisters, marital status, children, full-time hockey player or other jobs, etc)

Sport:

1. Would you mind telling me a little bit about your hockey background? For example, when did you lace up your skates for the first time?
2. How long have you been playing hockey?
3. Who got you involved in the sport?
4. When did you decide that you wanted to pursue the sport professionally?
5. What are some of the more memorable experiences you have had in this sport?

Previous Coaches:

Would you mind talking about some of the coaches that you have played for in the past? What was your relationship like with them?

Coaching Transition:

1. Now let's talk about your coach this year. What was your relationship with (pseudonym) when he was your teammate last year?
2. What were your thoughts last summer when the team announced that (pseudonym) was named coach of the team?
3. Did you talk to him often over the summer? If so, what did those conversations usually entail?
4. Take me through training camp. Was it different than in years past? Was there anything that stood out about the camp? What was (pseudonym) like?
5. Can you take just a couple of minutes and talk about a typical morning practice? What was (pseudonym) like during practice?
6. What was (pseudonym) like once the season began?
7. Do you think your relationship as teammates last year affected the way he treated you this year? Did it change your relationship?
8. How did he communicate to you what needed to be done both on the ice and in the locker room?
9. Do you think your relationship would have been different had he not been a former teammate?

10. How do you think being the coach affected his relationship with other former teammates that were on the team?
11. Are there any times that having a relationship with him in the past made some situations easier to deal with? Or perhaps the exact opposite?
12. Did your performance on the ice dictate your relationship/conversations with him off the ice?
13. How has this coach been for you compared to some of the other coaches you have played for?
14. What is your relationship with him now as your coach?

Example Probes: Please describe. What was that like for you? How did that make you feel? Would you talk a little more about that? How did that affect you?

Appendix C – Interpretations of the Transcripts (Sample)

S – [Coach's name]. He was our head coach. He was kind of a different guy. He's kind of old school in terms of he shows up at the arena, goes to his office, stays in the office, goes on the ice, runs practice, goes back in his office. So, as far as like, you know, joking around type of thing, he wasn't really into that which wasn't bad. He was really professional. He was a really good person; he was always there to talk to you. But at the same time, he was different than other coach that I've ever had because he never really hung out with guys in the locker room and you know, joke around, or play ping pong, or do whatever we do in the locker room. He was more or less, just the guy who you see him when you get on the ice, you see him, you know, game days, and all that kind of stuff. But, um, he was a real, I guess he kind of gave you your independence a little bit, he just kind of let you do your thing, but he was always there to keep you in line, or to make sure you were doing well with school and hockey and everything so.

A – Overall, would you have liked a little more of kind of what your old coaches would do, like hang out with you and joke around?

S – Yep. Everyone's different see. Some players like the fact that there coaches kind of stay away and let them do their thing. But, I like a coach who talks to you a little bit more and gets to know you more on a personal level other than just a hockey level. I would have rather had him, um, take more time to be a part of the locker room atmosphere and kind of get to know the guys on a different level other than hockey, get to know them on more of a personal basis and that's what I like. I just like personality people. That's the type of person I am. But, like I said everyone's different. Some people prefer their coaches to do that, so, but myself, I would have rather had him take more time to be involved with guys on that standpoint.

A – Well, this is a kind of a nice segue into the next part of our talk. Talk to me about the coach that you had this year. He was your teammate last year. What was your relationship with him last year?

S – Last year as a teammate. Um, I knew him a little bit coming into the season because I played against him a couple of years before that. And ah, [Coach Henry]'s a good guy. I mean, I guess in a way he's kind of old school. He played for so long and he did his own thing in the locker room…had his own beliefs about things and stuff like that. But ah, [Coach Henry] and I ended up playing together as linemates from Christmas on so I got to know him real well. When you play with a guy on the same line, you develop a little bit of a relationship further than you would if you didn't play with him. So, [Coach Henry] and I got along. We never had a problem all year last year. He respected the way I played; I respected the way he played. And ah, he was a good person to have on the team because his experience and his knowledge of the game and everything, his competitiveness and um. [Coach Henry] and I, you know we weren't best friends off the ice we didn't go out every day and you know, have a drink or go have dinner but every single day, just being teammates and being linemates and stuff, we had a real good relationship.

Mutual respect stemming from being teammates last year

A – What were your thoughts when you found out that the coach that you had and the general manager that you had were gone and that [Coach Henry] was now taking over as the head coach?

S – I knew that there were going to be some changes just because financial reasons. I know that the team lost money last year and that they were going to make changes this year that's just the nature of the business. When I found out that [Coach Henry] was the head coach I was excited, because I've had an opportunity to play for a guy that was a friend of mine and somebody who…You know you always want to play for a coach that knows what your abilities are. You always have to prove yourself regardless, but it's nice to play for a coach that you've proven yourself in front of already. That was a good feeling for me because he knew my situation, that I lived here in [city name], I wanted to play here, I proved myself as a player to him last year, and I like him as a person, and he is a straight shooter. So when I found out he was the coach, that made a world of difference in my decision, of playing, because I wasn't even a 100% sure if I was going to play this year, but once he got the head coaching job, I knew for sure I wanted to play.

Enjoys playing for a coach who knows his abilities.
He doesn't feel he has to prove himself.

A – After he was announced as the head coach did you talk to him very much over the summer? If you did talk to him, what did you guys talk about?

S – Well obviously, the first thing was, uh, we had to get a contract done. And uh, we had some negotiations after he was named coach and he finally got the go ahead to start signing some players. He signed myself and a couple of other local guys here that have played for him before, and with him, or sorry, with him and who have played for a long time. He got us under contract right away and uh, kind of used us as his core group of players to build around. So we helped him in the recruiting process. He asked us questions about certain players that we might have played with or against and what are thoughts were on them and if we knew them as a person. And kind of what they would bring to the table. He did ask us a lot of questions over the summertime because he wanted our input. He was a rookie coach and had a lot to learn. So he kind of used some of the older guys' opinions and advice on certain players. So we did, we were in contact quite a bit before the season.

Liked that the coach solicited his input during the player recruitment process.

A – You mentioned earlier a little bit about being unsure whether you wanted to play anymore. How did that affect you once training camp actually started? Was your routine any different now that you knew you were coming back? Take me through what was going on through your mind.

S – Well as far as training camp went, this is the first time in my entire life I've gone into a training camp more relaxed than I have ever been before. That's not always a good thing in hockey but I came into training camp this year I knew I was going to be on the team. They invite, you get 45-50 players come into the camp for 18 spots on the team it's pretty competitive. I knew that I had one of those spots locked up already so I didn't put pressure on myself to perform, but I did put pressure on myself because I didn't want to let [Coach Henry] down. He looked at me as a key signee on the team, and looked at me as a player to be a leader. So, I kind of wanted to set the tempo right from the first day of training camp and show him that I was going to work hard for him and at the same time set the tone for some of the younger guys on the team. Training camp was intense this year. We had some good players come in. Some young guys that really worked hard and the

Less pressure in training camp because guaranteed roster spot.

Put pressure on himself because he didn't want to let the coach down.

Self inflicted pressure to lead by example to prove his coach's faith in him.

older guys, for the most part showed up, and worked just as hard as they did. Training camp was definitely an intense couple of weeks.

A – Was there anything that stood out for you about that camp?

S – I liked the fact that because [Coach Henry] was just a player last year and he was moving right into a coach, he still had that player mentality in the back of his head. So he knew sometimes that there were times to back off, and times where you can't really push your players to the point that they can't even go anymore. You know, he respected our limits, and he didn't keep the training camps 3, 4, 5 hours like a lot of teams do. Because when you are on the ice for 4-5 hours a day you are so tired you can't perform. You just can't do it. And he knew that which was great because he was a player last year and he respected the fact that the guys were tired and when we needed a little bit of rest he would give us some rest and so I loved that. [Coach Henry] just coming off being a player he knew how to handle situations like that, you know better than maybe coaches who haven't played in 10-15 years.

The coach had player's mentality. He remembers what it was like to be a player.

It seems important to have your coach be able to relate to the rigors of playing the game.

A – Did he ask for your input? For example, did he ask "[Steve] are we going too hard…should I ease it up today?" was he asking for yours and some of the older, veteran players for their input?

S – Yep. He did actually. Pretty much daily he would pull myself and Mark in the locker room and say "how do you think so and so did today in practice today." He would pick out a random guy. He would ask "Are you guys tired, are you sore, do you guys need a rest". So every day we were in contact more on a level of evaluating some of the younger kids who were on the bubble to make the team. But, he also asked "hey do you think we are going to hard, do you think we need to go harder, do you think we need to change some of the drills?" It was kind of cool, because I've never had that kind of input before um, you know, being a player, so he really respected mine and Mark's input on everything from players to how long we should skate to what drills we should do to how long scrimmages should be. You know, so it was kind of cool.

Important to be allowed input on team matters.

Player appreciated having his opinion respected from coach.

A – I get the feeling that it was a pretty positive atmosphere. It sounds to me like it was probably pretty exciting for you going from not knowing if you wanted to play anymore to the fact that wow, you are playing for a guy that is your buddy and he is actually asking you for a lot of input. So in a way it is kind of like being a player-assistant coach.

S – Yep.

A – Now, what was it like for you and what was it like for [Coach Henry] once the season started?

S – Well, once the season started like I can remember our opening game against [opponent's name]. Our team was… we were so excited and we honestly thought we were invincible. We had a lot of good players. [Coach Henry], and myself and some of the older guys said "you know what there is no way we can lose…we just have too good of a team." And, uh, I think that backfired on us, because we just expected to show up and win. We came into the first game really relaxed and positive and then all of a sudden we are 0-4. And uh, [Coach Henry]'s getting pressure from the owners and uh, in response to that, here I am, you know, I am a leader on the team. I'm not performing like I should. I'm putting extra pressure on myself. It was a tough, tough start this year because we got out to a bad start, our top players weren't producing. [Coach Henry] was getting pressure from the owners, and uh, it was a real hectic time to start the season. It definitely wasn't the way we wanted to start.

High expectations on the season.

Player senses coach feeling pressure from owners and puts more pressure on himself to perform better.

A – I bet it wasn't. Did he, with the extra pressure that he was experiencing as a rookie coach and really wanting to do well and what not, and what you mentioned recently was that you weren't performing to your expectations and some of the senior guys weren't performing as they expected themselves to be, now did he somehow put a little more pressure on you or take you in…

S – Yep, well I was definitely a unique situation because I was awarded captaincy to start the season this year. And that was something that I really took, it was just a great honor for me... that was just an unbelievable honor for me to be a captain of a professional hockey team. And I've

Felt quite an honor for the coach to name him captain.

never been a captain of not even my junior team. I was an assistant captain and I was an assistant captain in college. But I've never been a captain before. And I think it was about our fifth or sixth game into the season, um, he…[Coach Henry] didn't even have to say anything to us. We knew the pressure was on us. When you've played that long you know the situation you're in. We knew, ah hah (slight laugh) that we had to pick it up, because when your struggling it's not the younger guys who are going to go, it's the older guys, because those are the guys who are not getting it done. So we put pressure on ourselves. And [Coach Henry], by the sixth or seventh game of the season, took the captaincy away from me. But, I didn't know it then, but I do know it now that he did it because he wanted to just relieve some pressure from me. He didn't do it because he was punishing me or because he doesn't think I am a good captain. He did it because he wanted to relieve the pressure that I was putting on myself. And I was putting a lot of pressure on myself. So, he gave it to Mark who is very well deserving of it. He's played for 10 years as opposed to me playing for 4. So after he did that, I just kind of relaxed a little bit and said "You know what, I just need to relax and play". And myself and everybody [Joe], Mark and Jacques all the older guys just started to score like crazy and get our confidence back. So that was my kind of unique situation with that whole captaincy thing. But know I now that he did that for good reason.

Steve knew that the burden on improving the team was placed on him and the other veterans.

Coach sensed this pressure and attempted to relieve this burden by taking the captaincy away which would allow him to just focus on playing.

Able to relax a little more and focus on his own play.

A – Do you think that because he was your teammate last year, do you think that the situation would have occurred had it been another coach seven games into the season had you been captain?

S – Um, I don't know. That's a tough question to answer because I've never really been in that situation before. [Coach Henry] told me that when he did it, it happened to him twice in his career, even one year when he was already a fourth or fifth year guy playing for [team name] in the [professional hockey league] where he has been an all-star three or four years in a row. The team got off to a 1-8 start and he was stripped of his captaincy. This is a guy that was in his 8th year pro playing for the same coach. So, once he said that to me I kind of realized that it could happen to anyone at this level. And uh, I mean it happens to guys in the NHL. And its not always a punishment I see that now.

Coach was able to relate his own growing pains as a player to get Steve to see bigger picture of having captaincy removed.

And uh, absolutely I think any coach would do that because they do that for different reasons. Sometimes people do it just because they don't think he is being a leader, sometimes people do it because they want to relieve some pressure and just kind of you know take a big burden off your shoulders and just kind of let you play as just one of the other players instead of always being in the spotlight. So I know now that he did that for all the right reasons and I look back on it now you know like I said four to five months later like right now and I realize that he did do me a favor there so.

Doing things to help makes even tough situations alright.

A – Did that whole situation change the relationship that you had with him?

S – Um, you know at first I would be crazy not to tell you that I had some bitter feelings about it just because I kind of looked at it as a slap in the face…who wouldn't. But, you know, I kind of stepped back and like I said, I didn't realize it then but I do know I stepped back and looked at the big picture and just realized that he wasn't doing that as punishment. He was doing it to help me. And uh, it didn't affect the relationship. You know, right after he did that to me, the next day he just talked to me as if nothing has ever happened and went on with our business. And uh, he stayed loyal to me through my tough times and I've stayed loyal to him through his tough times and uh, that's not only being a respectful player and coach, but also that kind of shows you know the friendship factor there too.

Having a strong relationship helped both Henry and Steve through difficult times on the ice.

A – Take me through a typical day of practice. How [Coach Henry] ran his practices. Were they any different than in years past? What was he like off the ice?

S – Yep. They were different. Very different because every coach that I've had um, I look back at my pro, excuse me, my collegiate and my pro career and um, my coaches were always tended to be the guys who just kind of get on the ice and stand there with their whistle in their hand and do this, do that, do this, do that. [Coach Henry] took more of a part in this as a player. Sometimes he'd get involved with drills and stuff. Sometimes he would, you know shoot pucks with the guys and you know just kind of joke around with them. But at the same time he demanded that we work hard. Every single day he had good practices planned for us. And

Coach was more involved.

Coach took a more proactive role by participating in practice.

Balance between being strict and relaxed.

he didn't take laziness easy. If guys weren't working hard he'd stop practice and skate us if he had to. So at the same time, you know, he was disciplinary with the guys (laughs) uh, disciplinary with the guys when he had to be. But he was also laid back and you know, just had fun. He always stressed to us you guys are not playing hockey to get rich you know which we're not because we don't make much money. He said you guys are playing because you love the game. And he says you know you have to have fun out here to succeed. I couldn't agree more. The best thing in the world is showing up in practice with a nice loose atmosphere. Going out there working hard and having fun and he made it fun for us this year because he always stressed guys you can work hard and have fun at the same time. I've never really had coaches that did that in the past. They were always guys who were like, you know, you got to this you got to do that blah blah blah. [Coach Henry] said 'hey guys yeah you got to work hard, but you have to make it fun too.' That was the best thing in the world. As a player you want to go to the rink every day and have fun and if you know you are going to get there in a bad atmosphere you don't even want to get out of bed in the morning.

"Love the game"

Emphasized fun and created an enjoyable atmosphere.

A – Because of the fact that you had a previous relationship with him, did he ask [you] or [Mark] or one of those guys do you think I should lay up a little bit today… how do you think practice should go today…should I work them pretty hard?

S – Yep. Yeah, he asked our opinion a lot during the season. Some days he would say "are you guys just beat up and tired…should today be an optional practice which means if you don't want to skate you don't have to. He would ask us "hey you think we'll go a little shorter today or what do you think we should work on…you know our power play is struggling, maybe we should work on our power play a little bit. Um, you know we are losing battles down low in our zone, maybe we should work on our defensive zone coverage. He asked our opinions on certain things but for the most part, you know, he ran good practices. They were quick. We were never on the ice for two hours. We were always go out there any practice for an hour at the longest sometimes an hour and ten minutes. But uh, he asked us our advice about certain things but for the

Player asked for their opinions regarding structuring practices.

most part he prepared good practices, prepared practices that would get us ready for the team we were playing next. Some teams are better offensively; we would work on the defensive zone. Some teams are weaker defensive and we would work on our transition. So he was always working our practices towards our next game. It wasn't just we were practicing this for the heck of it. You know, there was always a purpose behind his practices.

A – How did he communicate to you and some of his former teammates that were known on the team? Did he talk to you differently than a lot of the new guys on the team?

S – No he never did. That's one thing…every now and again…he…huh…I remember the one he said to us at the end of the year banquet. Um, he said I just want to say a special thanks to and then he listed off about six guys that were on our team this year that he says they are not only my players but their my friends. Then he also went on to say that he was tougher on us than everyone and he was. Um, you know in practices, no matter who you are on the ice, uh, you know he would be tough on you. You know every now and again, he would say hey listen "you know I hate to do this, but if you want to learn how to become a better player why don't you watch [Steve] or [Mark] practice today. Watch how hard those guys work. You know they have fun, but they work hard every single shift. And he said some of you younger guys need to learn from that. And [Coach Henry] doesn't like to do that, because he doesn't like to compliment us to make us feel like we are so special. But at the same time sometimes that needs to be said. Some of these younger guys need to look to other players so… But as far as talking to us differently you know…when we are on the ice I was just another one of the players. It doesn't matter if I was a rookie or who I am I was just another one of the guys out there. He never talked to me more than anybody else; he never talked to me less than anybody else. That's the one thing he did. He always kept it even keel with all the guys on the team regardless of who you were.

Coach thanked veteran players for hard work and setting examples for the other players.

Communicates same for all players.

A – Now did that same thing hold true in the locker room or maybe on bus trips?

S – No. You know when you are riding on a ten hour bus ride or you are sitting around in the locker room after practice having a Gatorade just hanging out that's when you can kind of let loose. That's where [Coach Henry]'s personality was different from the coaches that I've had before. Because he was the guy who would come out and sit down with us and say "you know what's going on buddy what are you doing today, do you want to get lunch or whatever." And um, I've never had a coach like that in the past. So, you know on the bus or in the locker room he definitely talked to the guys he knew more than some of the other guys. But it wasn't a slap in the face at the guys he didn't talk to, but it's just that, you know what, he was our buddy there's times that you can unwind and not talk about hockey and that's what we did.

Social relationship with former teammates.

A – How did that help the relationship throughout the year? The fact that he would not be constantly not just asking you "[Steve] you need to do this, this and this on the ice", but ask instead how is life going for you, etc.

S – Absolutely. Because [Coach Henry] knows there's a lot more to life to hockey. He just got married now. He's got a big life outside of hockey that he's never had before. And uh, he understands the importance…sometimes that you get burned out with hockey, its such a long season, sometimes you just need to go watch a movie with the guy or go have a steak dinner somewhere and just kind of talk about life you know. Sometimes that keeps your sanity, because when your just hockey, hockey, hockey you get burned out. And um, [Coach Henry], I think that helped me, because I had some tough times this season and just knowing that [Coach Henry] was still basically, it sounds weird, but you know he was still there for you and still your buddy kind of gives a little comfort level. Even when I was having a tough time this year scoring goals, you know he wasn't down on me because I wasn't scoring because he knew I was working hard. Sometimes you can't control whether the puck goes in the net or not and he understands that because he's played. And he went through tough times so he helped me uh, a lot this year, just because he always kept me on an even keel. If I wasn't playing so good he'd still let me know, or kind of make me feel that I am the best player. And when I was scoring like crazy, he would still kind of make me feel like I still got to keep scoring, keep working

Important to have social support outside playing environment.

Coach kept the spirits up of Steve regardless of performance.

hard. So, that's one of the things that I have to commend him about.

A – Do you think that the relationship would have been different had he not been a former teammate. Do you think the same things that he just commented on now would have been such strong advice if he hadn't played with you before?

S – Um. Maybe not. Because like I said, it all goes back to playing for somebody you've proven yourself in front of. And say you are playing for a coach that you've never played for before who has never even seen you play and you've got 5 goals 26 games into the season. He's like, "we have to get that guy out of here." That's just the way minor pro hockey works. But, [Coach Henry] knew what kind of player I was. He knew what I could do. He stayed patient with me and you know it paid off. Because, you know, even when I was struggling, he still made me feel like a top, top player. A lot of coaches wouldn't do that, because they don't know their players, they've never seen their players in the past; they've never played with them. They don't know them as people. They don't know what they are capable of. I definitely think that because we've played together that definitely helped our relationship this year.

Familiarity → don't feel like you have to gain his respect → security and comfort.

A – How do you think him being the coach, did it affect the relationship that he had with the other guys that were on the team last year with him? Do you think him being the coach changed anything with you or with any of the other guys?

S – I don't know. I mean, I know because we've played together and he's seen me play before and the other guys. He kind of had a level of expectation as to what we were going to do, so, or what we were capable of doing and we kind of knew that going in, so maybe uh, you know different things that occur during the course of the season, he could always reflect back on last year and say well "hey I remember last year, you know, you were playing like this or you were doing that and that's when you were most successful…you need to do that now type of thing. Just the fact that he had some previous knowledge about us, that might have changed our relationship a little bit, in regards to expectations and um, you know what he expected us to bring to the table every single day in that regards I think that would be the biggest thing.

Playing together improves coach/athlete relationship.

Expectations were based on his experience playing with guys.

A – Was it the same relationship with all you guys, or were there some of the five of you guys last year like you and [Mark] that had different expectations from [Coach Henry]?

S – I think everybody was different, because, you know a guy like [Dan]; he really didn't get a chance to prove himself to his full potential last year. So for him coming in this year, there was still question marks about his ability, because [Coach Henry] had never really seen him play. So, um, you know he was kind of different because he had to reprove himself all over again. You know, then myself and Mark, you know we are older guys who've played longer, we've proven ourselves. So like I touched on earlier, we kind of were more or less in a comfort zone. You never want to use that term in hockey, but we were more or less in more of a comfort zone. [Bill] um, he had a pretty good solid rookie season, but [Coach Henry] still expected him to increase his level of play and to be honest with you he was a question mark in training camp whether or not he was going to make the team. So, um, [Coach Henry] was professional with him you know joking with him a little bit, but at the same time, he made [Bill] know that he was fighting for his life there. And uh, you know Joe to; he was basically at the same level of myself and Mark. Yeah, I would say that he had five unique relationships with five different returning players because everybody…uh, he brought us back for a reason obviously because he liked us, but at the same time, you know everybody was kind of in a different situation coming into the season, so I would say that everyone had their own unique kind of relationship.

Previous playing experience influenced coach's expectations.

A – Were there any times that having a relationship in the past made situations easier to deal with this year? Or the exact opposite?

S – Yep. Definitely, both ways there. First of all, easier. When I was having a tough time at the start of the season not only was I frustrated with myself, but I felt like I was letting him down. And uh, you know any other coach I would have had a tough time going in there trying to have an emotional conversation with him saying listen "you know I feel terrible man! I'm working hard. I know I'm underachieving." But with [Coach Henry], you know I felt

Tough times at beginning of season left Steve feeling he was letting coach down.

Previous relationships lead to increased expectations and increased pressure.

Felt comfortable talking with coach compared to years past.

comfortable. I would walk into his office as a friend as a player and say "hey listen, you know I feel that I am letting you down here I want you to know that I am working as hard as I can. It's not that I am just going through the motions." And you know [Coach Henry] would say "hey I know you are. I have been there before as a player. I know what you can do." So right away I felt good because I said you know what he knows that I am trying its not like I am going in there not trying. So I felt better right away. Then on the reverse side of that, just because he is someone I have played with before, someone that I consider a friend, I put extra pressure on myself all year to perform because I was one of his first signees this year. I was his captain. I was a guy that he looked to, to be a leader every single day. If I didn't lead, then, you know, the team wouldn't have been as good as they were. And its' not just me, but I am just dealing with my relationship (laughter).
But, uh, if I didn't lead on and off the ice then, you know, I was letting him down and I knew that every day so, there was always a fine line there. You know, I could be his friend and his buddy, but at the same time, if I didn't perform and everything, I'd kind of feel like I was a letdown to him. So I always put added pressure on myself just for that reason. Plus, it's his first year as a coach. I wanted him to do well. I wanted him to have a good first season. I wanted him to move up the ladder just like every other coach does.

"I'd kind of feel like I was letting him down. So I always put added pressure on myself."

A – Now your performance on the ice. Did that in any way dictate your relationship, or conversations with him off the ice?

S – You know what. I can honestly say no. From the start of the year to the finish of the year whether I was scoring hat tricks or whether I wasn't scoring at all, [Coach Henry] and I still had the same relationship off the ice. I can honestly say to you that 99% of the conversation we have off the ice or away from the game has got nothing to do with hockey. We talk about, you know, our girlfriends and we talk about, uh, the weather, we talk about movies. You know what I mean; we don't even talk about hockey. I think that it's the best thing to do. He knows that. You can't….people say you can't take your work home with you. It's the same thing in hockey. You can't go home and just dwell on hockey all the time. Every time [Coach

Well rounded relationship.

Henry] and I ever talk, you know, if we go have a bite to eat, we talk about the movie he saw last night, or…hockey wasn't even an issue. That's the way I like it and I know that's the way he likes it to.

A – It sounds like you were able to balance and shift roles pretty well. Do you think it made it easier for him to deal with going from a player to coach after all those years?

S – You know what I think was the easiest thing for him was that, he knew that we were smart enough and experienced enough to know that once we stepped foot in the arena it was business. You know, we couldn't be like "Hey [Coach Henry], what's up buddy? You want to go to Red Lobster tonight?" You know, we knew that we had to show up be like every other player, go in the locker room, get dressed, work hard on the ice in practice. And there's always time for, you know, for hanging out and doing your own thing away from the ice. But, I think he just knew that we were smart enough and experienced enough guys that we weren't going to take him for granted at the arena. And that made it easier for him because he could put all the players on an even keel.

Didn't abuse the relationship on the ice.

A – Thanks. I was wondering if you would mind talking about the coach you played for last year. And maybe a couple of the other coaches you played for. Briefly talk about the relationship you had with them and what they were like.

S – Yep. Well my first year…I'll just touch on maybe two or three of them. Carl. He was my coach in [city name] my rookie year. And Carl was a guy that was real private, to himself, referring to…uh, he was one of those guys that would show up, go in his office, you know go on the ice for practice, etc. He wasn't really around the guys a whole lot, but at the same time that guy appreciated his players as much or more than anyone I have ever seen in my life. Whether you were scoring goals or not, if you were working as hard as you can every single game, that guy had so much respect for you. And because we knew that, it brought so much out of us as players. And he would always, if you had a good game, he would walk up to you and say "hey, he would actually thank you. Thank you so much you are playing so hard for me. I can't describe how

much that means to me. I love it, blah, blah, blah. When you hear something like that you are like "wow, man, I want to do that for this guy every game!" That's why he wins championships and he's so successful. Um, you know, I had a good relationship with him. We didn't talk every day like buddy, buddy, but I felt like I could talk to him when I needed to. My coach in [team name]. He was really, really different. [Frank] was his name. He really had no communication with his players whatsoever. Like I mean, he would not talk to his players at all. He would sit at the front of the bus and wouldn't talk to us. He would only talk to us during practice and during games. And I've never felt more uncomfortable in my entire life talking to a coach. I only played there for 15 games. It was at the end of my second season. And uh, the city was awesome, the hockey was awesome, but I can honestly say that I never really talked to the guy in 15 games. I think that's why I didn't resign there the next year. I had a chance to go back there. I loved the hockey team…the city. But I didn't go there because I had no connection with him whatsoever. A lot of players have come and gone with him because of that. Uh, and then [Burns] last year. I don't even know how to explain that guy. He was a different bird. He uh, you know, he was almost the same way as the guy I just explained, [Frank] in [city name]. He kept to himself, he had his favorites on the team, he had his opinions about guys. And uh, he was real narrow minded about things. It was his way or no way. And um, I never really felt comfortable talking to him about anything last year either. As a matter of fact I can honestly say that in a 56-60 game schedule last year I might have went in his office one time. And I don't even know if that was to talk about hockey. So, that can kind of give you an example of how my relationship was with him. So, uh, basically there you can see how much I appreciated [Henry] this year and being able to talk to him on a casual basis that we did.

Steve appreciated the off-ice relationship with his coach.

A – A couple more questions here. Now your relationship with him now as a coach. Do you think it is a better relationship with him now as a coach than you had with him as a player?

S – Well, first and foremost for me, I had a really good season for him this year, once I did start playing well. I played really well; as good as I have ever played in my life.

Somewhat relieved that he played well, therefore, he did not let his coach down. He wanted to play well to help his friend.

I feel like, I didn't let him down. I feel like I, you know, you don't want to say did him a favor, but you feel that you really contributed to his success. He appreciates that and I appreciate that so uh, just that alone makes you feel good as a player. I mean it definitely doesn't hurt your relationship when you work hard and play well for your coach and your friend. [Coach Henry] and I have, I would say are closer now. We have known each other longer know. We have been through more together now. We have been through two teams and two championship series together. So, I would say that I think our relationship has grown and this year has helped our relationship even more because he has looked to me for advice for my opinion on different things and I have given him my honest opinion. I've been honest and straightforward with him about everything on and off the ice. I think that has definitely helped our relationship.

A – Final thing. Is there anything else that you would like to talk about that I didn't add. Or is there anything about [Coach Henry] that you would like to touch upon.

S – Not that I can think of.

A – Okay. Well thanks very much for everything today. A – Was there anything that stood out for you about that camp?

S – I liked the fact that because [Coach Henry] was just a player last year and he was moving right into a coach, he still had that player mentality in the back of his head. So he knew sometimes that there were times to back off, and times where you can't really push your players to the point that they can't even go anymore. You know, he respected our limits, and he didn't keep the training camps 3, 4, 5 hours like a lot of teams do. Because when you are on the ice for 4-5 hours a day you are so tired you can't perform. You just can't do it. And he knew that which was great because he was a player last year and he respected the fact that the guys were tired and when we needed a little bit of rest he would give us some rest and so I loved that. [Coach Henry] just coming off being a player he knew how to handle situations like that, you know better than maybe coaches who haven't played in 10-15 years.

The coach had player's mentality. He remembers what it was like to be a player.

It seems important to have your coach be able to relate to the rigors of playing the game.

A – Did he ask for your input? For example, did he ask "[Steve] are we going too hard…should I ease it up today?" was he asking for your's and some of the older, veteran players for their input?

S – Yep. He did actually. Pretty much daily he would pull myself and Mark in the locker room and say "how do you think so and so did today in practice today." He would pick out a random guy. He would ask "Are you guys tired, are you sore, do you guys need a rest?" So every day we were in contact more on a level of evaluating some of the younger kids who were on the bubble to make the team. But, he also asked "hey do you think we are going to hard, do you think we need to go harder, do you think we need to change some of the drills?" It was kind of cool, because I've never had that kind of input before, um, you know, being a player, so he really respected mine and Mark's input on everything from players to how long we should skate, to what drills we should do, to how long scrimmages should be. You know, so it was kind of cool.

Input solicited by coach.

Player appreciated having his opinion respected from coach.

Appendix D – Researcher, Confidentiality Agreement

This is a research study that will examine the coach-athlete relationship and is in partial fulfillment of the Masters requirements in sport psychology for Ashwin J. Patel. During the data analysis, I, along with two other individuals skilled in qualitative research, will examine the transcripts independently to further strengthen the trust of the information (Patton, 2002). The transcribed interviews will be thematized and coded into categories by each individual. The group will meet as a whole to interpret the data by taking turns reading the participant's transcript, pausing to discuss potential meanings immersed in the data, and then attempting to find relationships within the text. Only the primary researcher and members of his research team will be permitted access to the transcripts.

I, _____ (print name) understand that as part of the research team in this project, I am expected to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. I acknowledge that I have access to personal information and will keep such information private. I will only discuss the information provided by the participants with other members of the research team. The identities of the participants will remain confidential unless they have permitted usage of their name in written form.

This important issue of confidentiality has been discussed with me and I agree to the terms of this agreement.

Signature_____ Date_____

Witness_____ Date_____

Vita

Ashwin John Patel was born in London, Ontario, Canada on December 16th, 1975. He attended elementary school at Our Lady of Fatima before matriculating from Chatham Collegiate Institute High School in June 1994. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a double major in Psychology and History from the University of Guelph, Ontario in June 1999. In August of 2000, Ashwin entered the masters degree program in Sport Psychology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The following year, he was awarded the A.W. Hobt Memorial Award for excellence in teaching while working as a Graduate Teaching Associate in the Department of Physical Education. In August of 2001, Ashwin entered the doctoral program in Sport Psychology at the University of Tennessee. Over the following four years he has taught physical activity courses, the introductory of sport and exercise psychology class, and served as a team facilitator for the MBA program. Since January of 2003, he has provided mental training services to the Knoxville Ice Bears, a professional minor league hockey team, as well as to several tennis players and motocross riders in the Knoxville area. Ashwin will receive his Masters degree from the College of Education, in August 2005. He plans to receive his Ph.D. in Education with a specialization in Sport Psychology in May 2006.